THEOLOGY AND GERMAN-AMERICAN EVANGELICALISM:

The Role of Theology in The Church of the United Brethren in Christ and The Evangelical Association

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SUMMARY

The Evangelical Association and the Church of the United Brethren in Christ are two German-American denominations which arose in the early years of the nineteenth century. Similar in ethnic origin, in their Wesleyan and Pietistic theology, and in their driving purpose to convert sinners, they eventually united in 1946 to form the Evangelical United Brethren Church. Their rise and development are an integral part of the story of American Protestantism.

It is my thesis that The Evangelical Church and the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, both of whom justifiably acquired reputations as small, revivalistic, anti-intellectual denominations, actually became very much engaged in serious theological study and training. This necessitates a revision of the familiar stereotype of simple and uninterrupted anti-intellectualism. Pure doctrine became almost as important as the cultivation of simple piety. Theological inquiry generally had as its primary aim the defense of the faith. Nevertheless, it was a serious intellectual activity, supported by considerable knowledge of contemporary philosophies. The budding interest in theological study was checked early in the twentieth century, however, when both churches recoiled from the new theological world they had begun to enter. Evangelical liberalism and militant fundamentalism were equally undesirable theological alternatives, and neither church possessed a rich and deep-going theological tradition that could provide the basis for a middle way.

This is not a detailed, full-scale history of doctrines, but an attempt to analyze the role of theological inquiry and to discern the attitudes of people toward it in these two denominations. The methodology employed is that of exhaustive examination of the theological literature produced by both churches. Because of the relative paucity of books and the scarcity of theologians whose leadership was generally accepted, the journals published by both churches have provided the most fruitful sources for study.

In the first part (from time of origins to 1841) attention is given to the heritage and prevailing theological emphases of both churches. Attitudes toward ministerial training and conceptions of the nature and function of theological inquiry come under scrutiny. The second part (1841-1890) traces the development of theological training and examines the use of theology primarily for defense of the faith. Notice is taken of modifications that occurred as Evangelicals and United Brethren confronted such problems as new approaches to the Bible, various philosophies, and science. In the third part (1890-1930) the conceptions of theological task and method are examined by studying the response to evangelical liberalism, higher criticism, the fundamentalist movement, and ecumenism.

TO MARCENE

PREFACE

In diverse ways the year 1800 divides two eras in American church history. A new century, the election of Jefferson, the end of the Revolutionary epoch, the emergence of a new nationalism. In religion the post-Revolutionary decline was giving way to a resurgence of revivalism, a recovery of piety, and rapidly growing church membership rolls. The nation had not forgotten the first such upsurge in religious life six decades before, indeed revivals continued in certain areas; but now the tides of religion were swelled by an independent American Methodism and by immigrants nurtured in German Pietism. The Church of the United Brethren in Christ and the Evangelical Association took their rise as part of this revivification of the Christian Church in America. Similar in ethnic origin, culture, and theology, these two churches eventually united in 1946. Born on the frontiers of the new nation, both movements have been labelled as anti-intellectual. Not only did the frontier dictate that learning and culture would not be foremost, but both were composed largely of Germans who were reacting against what they regarded as an arid rationalism produced by the universities of their homeland. Strange indeed if these people had begun their movements by erecting a college! Their strength--their interest--their driving concern was not the study of theology. The saving of the lost was their goal.

Theology has led a checkered career throughout the history of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ and the Evangelical Association. On the one hand, both denominations demonstrated their concern for pure

doctrine--or correct theology. In 1839 and 1841 their General Conferences forbade any future change in their Articles of Faith, but by that time both had established reputations for being far more devoted to the cultivation of vital Christian experience than to careful theological study. This dissertation is an effort to understand this ambivalence and the changing status of theology in the history of these two denominations.

It is my thesis that The Evangelical Church and The Church of the United Brethren in Christ, both of whom justifiably acquired reputations as small, revivalistic, anti-intellectual denominations, actually became very much engaged in serious theological study and training. This necessitates a revision of the familiar stereotype of simple and uninterrupted anti-intellectualism. The budding interest in theological study was checked early in the twentieth century, however, when both churches recoiled from the new theological world they had begun to enter. In this unfamiliar domain the heirs of Schleiermacher reigned supreme, and these revivalists sensed a basic incompatibility between theological liberalism and their own simple confidence in the Bible as the Word of God. If theology were merely a synonym for liberal religious sentiments, there was no other choice than to withdraw from it--boycott it. The purpose of this study has been to examine these shifts in attitudes towards theology, to try to learn why they occurred, and to see their significance for the larger life of both churches.

This is not a denominational history; these have been written by historians A. W. Drury, Raymond Albright, and Paul Eller. Nor is it an effort to present a detailed and comprehensive history of doctrine. Since both these churches disparaged formal theological works, such a study would have limited value. Instead, my efforts have focussed on the "climate of opinion" which provides the background both for this lack of theological

productivity and also for such theological activity which did occur. Of pre-eminent interest have been the changing conceptions of the whole theological enterprise.

To that end, I have studied diaries, biographies, books of discipline, ministerial study courses, conference journals, and publications by denominational authors. Yet these sources alone would tell a scanty story. Hence, I have subjected the journals of both denominations to detailed examination. The Religious Telescope, the Evangelical Messenger, Der Christliche Botschafter, and The Evangelical were periodicals which exercised the most important and widespread theological influence in their respective denominations.[1] Armed with the promise and the warning of another historian that the files of the Religious Telescope were "at once the mine and the despair of the historian,"[2] I have been determined to make full use of these important resources, for they are unequalled in their capacity to convey the flavor of popular thinking in both churches.[3]

A word about theology, a term of multiple mutations and connotations. I have understood it in its broad sense, as applying to creeds, to systems of doctrine, to systematic works, to certain parties or schools of thought, to the training offered by theological schools, and to the offhand thoughts about the divine which any man, lay or clerical, may have had. All of these have their place in this study, but only because they shed light on prevailing attitudes toward the method and function of any serious and

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[1]Frank Luther Mott (American Journalism [New York: The Macmillan Co., 1941], p. 206) and Carl Russell Fish (The Rise of the Common Man, 1830-1850 [New York: The Macmillan Co., 1927], p. 224) both testify to the importance of religious journalism in mid-nineteenth-century America.

[2]A. W. Drury, History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ (Dayton, Ohio: The Otterbein Press, 1924), p. 565.

[3]Translations are those of the writer unless otherwise indicated.

careful inquiry into religious matters.

Chronological criteria provide an artificial but helpful basis for dividing the work into three sections. The first part is devoted to the formative period extending from the period of origins to 1841. During this time occurred the formulation and fixing of statements of faith and the shaping of characteristic emphases. The second section covers the period from 1841 to 1890. In this period appears the dialectic between the standards which were established in the first period and the practical problems which arose as these sects became denominations. The third part surveys the years from 1890 to 1930. During this period both churches focussed their attention outward on the trans-denominational movements of liberalism, higher criticism, fundamentalism, and ecumenism. Although the denomination is very much alive today (763,380 members), the study ends at 1930 in order to preserve some historical perspective.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE	ii
ILLUSTRATIONS	x
KEY TO SOURCES	xi

PART I. FOUNDING AND DEVELOPMENT TO 1841

Chapter		
I.	HISTORICAL PROLOGUE	2
II.	THE THEOLOGICAL STANCE	9
	Christian Experience	9
	Instantaneous Conversion	12
	Assurance	13
	Human Depravity	13
	Evangelistic Efforts	14
	The Overcoming of Sin	16
	The Importance of Meditation	17
	Criteria for the Evaluation of Christian Experience	19
	Scripture	19
	Common Sense	24
	Good Works	26
III.	THE TRAINING OF A MINISTER	31
	The Fear of Education	31
	Sources of Influence	36
	Training By Study Course	45
IV.	THE NATURE AND FUNCTION OF THEOLOGICAL INQUIRY	50
	Theology for Defense of the Faith	51
	The Enemies	54
	Attitudes Toward Theology	62

PART II. FROM 1841 TO 1890

Chapter		Page
V.	THE GROWTH OF THEOLOGICAL AWARENESS	70
	Historical Introduction	70
	Continuity with the Past	74
	Theological Study Begins in Earnest	78
	Preparation for the Ministry	79
	Towards Theological Seminaries	83
	The influence of German immigration	86
	Curricula	90
	The Trek to Yale Divinity School	92
	Theological Education by Study Course and Institute	94
	The Effect of Theological Training	98
VI.	TO DEFEND THE FAITH	106
	Fear of German Rationalism	108
	The Infidel	113
	Miscellaneous Means of Defense	121
	The Enemy Within	124
VII.	THE ADOPTION OF A PHILOSOPHY	132
	Scottish Common-Sense Realism	141
VIII.	JOSEPH COOK	152
	From Affinity to Affiliation	154
	Why Cook Was Accepted	158
	The Position of Cook	167
IX.	SCIENCE, SCHOLARSHIP AND SCRIPTURE	172
	Attitudes toward Scripture	173
	Christian Faith and Science	184
	The Nature and Role of Theology	187

PART III. 1890 TO 1930

X.	THE LURE OF LIBERALISM	197
	Historical Introduction	197
	Acquaintance with Liberal Leaders	202
	Attendance at other seminaries	202
	Courses of study	206
	Other contacts with American liberals	206
	Rapprochement with German theology	208
	Liberal Leadership among Evangelicals and United Brethren	214
	Importance of Education	216
	The Place of Philosophy	220
	Revision of Traditional Education and Evangelism	224

Chapter Page

XI. THE DOCTRINES OF LIBERALISM 227

Introduction 227
Tentativeness 228
Tolerance 234
Comparative Religion 240
Immanentism 243
The Glorification of Man 246
Personality 248
Christocentrism 251
Openness to Science 256
Conclusion 264

XII. THE RESPONSE TO HIGHER CRITICISM 266

Introduction 266
Defense of the Scriptures 270
Protecting the Pattern of Church Life 270
The minister's role 270
Revivalism 271
Higher criticism vs. missions 272
Infiltration of the Sunday School 273
Higher education 274
Defending the Reputation of Scripture 278
Trustworthiness of the Bible 278
Debilitating influence of higher criticism . . . 278
The reinforcement of archaeology 279
Inerrancy and infallibility 279
Propositional revelation 282
The supernatural origin of the Bible 283
Dissolution of prophecy 286
An Arsenal of Assorted Arguments 287
Premature victory celebrations 287
Irreverence of higher critics 289
A haven for heretics 293
The temptation to obscurantism 294
The appeal to authority 295
A call to scholarship 297
Victory in sight 298
Liberal Attitudes Toward the Bible 300
Criticism Not All Destructive 300
Unworthy Reasons for Opposing Higher Criticism 302
The Plea for Greater Tolerance 303
An Alternative to Supernaturalism 306
Reconsideration of the Nature of Revelation 307
Conclusion 312

Chapter		Page
XIII.	A FUNDAMENTALIST POSTURE	314
	The Rise of a Movement	314
	Theological Method and Theological Language	321
	Spread of Theological Literacy	329
	Objects of Defense	331
	A Pattern of Church Life	331
	Important Doctrines	339
XIV.	FRATERNIZATION WITH FUNDAMENTALISTS	345
	Friends of the Faith	345
	Enemies of the Faith	350
	The Fundamentalist Crusade	363
	Conclusion	369
XV.	ECUMENISM AND THE SOCIAL GOSPEL	372
	Introduction	372
	Cautious Interest in the Ecumenical Movement	377
	Ethics and the Social Gospel Movement	381
	United Brethren Espouse the Social Gospel	387
	Postmillennialism	396
	Optimism	398
XVI.	THE COMMITMENT TO REVIVALISM	405
	Centrality of Christian Experience	408
	Persistence of Anti-Intellectualism	414
	Conclusion	419
CONCLUSION		420
BIBLIOGRAPHY		426

ILLUSTRATIONS

Following page

1. Philip William Otterbein (A. W. Drury, History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, Courtesy of The Otterbein Press) 2

2. John Seybert (Courtesy of Evangelical Theological Seminary, Naperville, Illinois) 10

3. Editors of the Religious Telescope (A. W. Drury, History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, Courtesy of The Otterbein Press) 72

4. T. G. Clewell (Courtesy of the Rev. Roy B. Leedy, Lakeside, Ohio)
   W. W. Orwig (Courtesy of Evangelical Theological Seminary, Naperville, Illinois) 86

5. I. L. Kephart and J. M. Phillippi; United Brethren Bishops in 1923 (A. W. Drury, History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, Courtesy of The Otterbein Press) 198

6. S. J. Gamertsfelder (Courtesy of Miss Ruth Gamertsfelder, Naperville, Illinois) 210

7. G. J. Kirn (North-Western College Spectrum, 1914, Courtesy of College-Seminary Library, Naperville, Illinois) 222

8. J. S. Mills; J. W. Etter (Courtesy of The Historical Society of the Evangelical United Brethren Church, the Rev. John H. Ness, Jr., Curator) 227

9. S. P. Spreng (Courtesy of Miss Ruth Gamertsfelder, Naperville, Illinois) 283

10. H. B. Hartzler (Courtesy of Evangelical Theological Seminary, Naperville, Illinois) 318

KEY TO SOURCES

CB	Der Christliche Botschafter
TE	The Evangelical
EM	Evangelical Messenger
GCJEA	General Conference Journal of the Evangelical Association
GCJEC	Proceedings of the General Conference of the Evangelical Church
GCJUB	Proceedings of the General Conference of the United Brethren in Christ
GCJUE	Proceedings of the General Conference of the United Evangelical Church
QR	Quarterly Review
RT	Religious Telescope

PART I

FOUNDING AND DEVELOPMENT TO 1841

I. HISTORICAL PROLOGUE

The Revolutionary era in America, portrayed by the historian as a period of deterioration and decline of vital religion, is the setting in which two pietistic and revivalistic denominations came to birth. In an age not noted for its spiritual zeal, religious awakenings began to kindle in southeastern Pennsylvania, Maryland, and northern Virginia among Mennonites, Lutherans and German Reformed, attracting particularly the disinherited and discontented in the rural hill-country.[1] Lay evangelists known as the "Virginia preachers" provided much of the leadership for the grosse Versammlungen [big meetings], which were being held to call the godless to repentance. These gatherings usually included a service on Saturday afternoon, another on Saturday evening, and concluded with three more on Sunday. The "big meeting" was a common occurrence in the later years of the Great Awakening; it was perpetuated throughout the Revolutionary era in "Dutch" country, and it later developed into the camp meeting.

At one of these meetings two men met whose lives and ministerial work were to become progressively intertwined in the years that lay ahead. Eventually they emerged into prominence as the founders of the United Brethren in Christ. One of them, Philip William Otterbein, was a well-educated German Reformed minister who had come to America in 1752 through the efforts of Michael Schlatter, a ministerial recruiter for the Classis of

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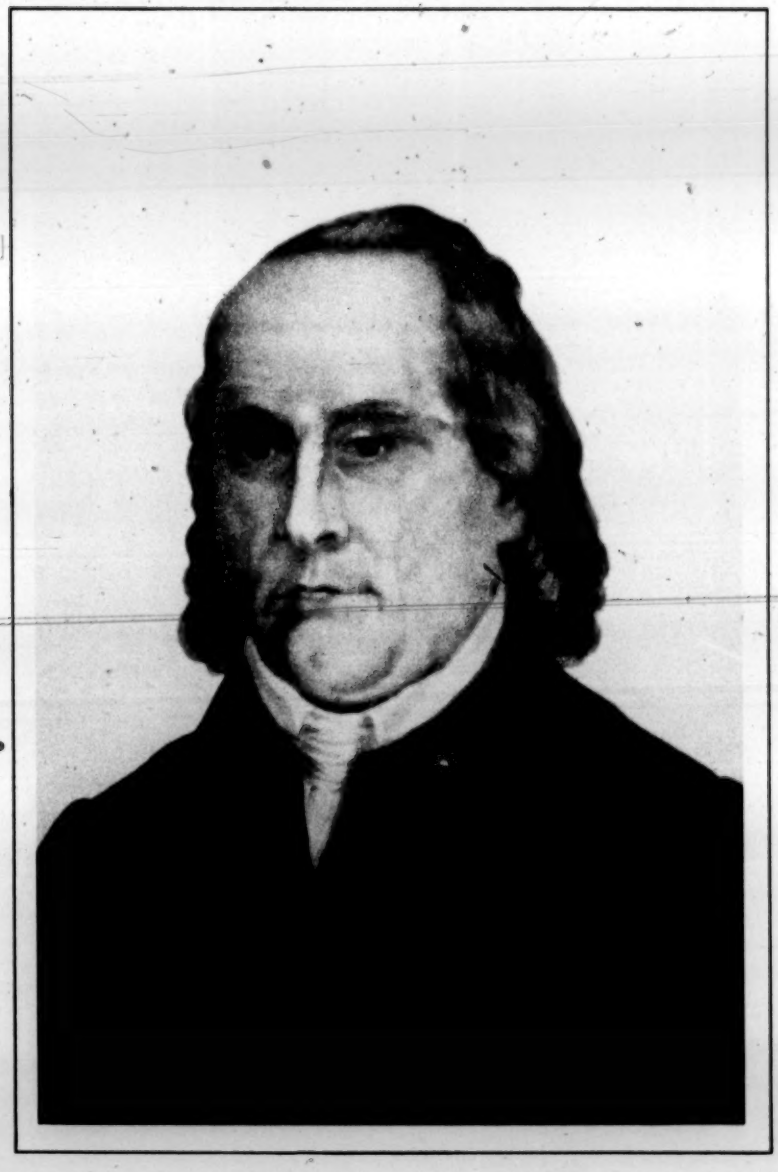
[1]Greater attention to sociological analysis would provide a clearer picture of these "Bush-Meeting Dutch," as Don Yoder calls them. He has made a valuable and provocative beginning in his Pennsylvania Spirituals (Lancaster, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania Folklife Society, 1961), especially chap. iii.



PHILIP WILLIAM OTTERBEIN

(A. W. Drury, HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF THE UNITED BRETHEN IN CHRIST – Courtesy of The Otterbein Press)

Amsterdam. Reared in a pietistic home and educated in a pietistic atmosphere, Otterbein engaged in a ministry which became increasingly revivalistic as he tried to speak to a generation preoccupied with other matters than vital Christian piety. His efforts to evangelize the unconverted and to require some marked change of heart of those who would join the church were not always appreciated. On one occasion (1767) his Coetus[1] accused him of irregularities because of his itinerant evangelization of German people in the rural counties of Pennsylvania and Maryland. The German Reformed Church he served in Frederick, Maryland, even barred him from the pulpit one Sunday morning because of his denunciations of the formal and lifeless religion of his members who put too much trust in their baptismal records and their observance of ecclesiastical ceremony.

Otterbein's co-laborer, Martin Boehm, was a Mennonite who was expelled from his church about 1780 for his revivalistic activities among his fellow churchmen in Pennsylvania. Deprived as he was of formal education, Boehm presented quite a contrast to Otterbein. Nevertheless, they joined their efforts when they realized that they shared a common goal. Their historic meeting in the Isaac Long barn (probably in 1767) provided the name for the denomination they founded, for Otterbein responded to Boehm's preaching with an embrace and the exclamation, "We are brethren." Not until 1813 was the name "United Brethren" adopted, but in the intervening years a fellowship of like-minded men from diverse denominational origins began to develop, issuing eventually into a rapidly-growing movement.

The Evangelische Gemeinschaft [Evangelical Association] owes its origin to the activities of Jakob Albrecht [Jacob Albright], the son of German

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[1]The Coetus was the ecclesiastical body binding together Reformed Churches in America until 1793, when they declared their independence from the Reformed Church of Holland.

immigrants who settled near Pottstown, Pennsylvania. After serving with the state militia in the Revolution, he settled down with a new bride in Lancaster County in 1785 to farm and make tile. Converted at a prayer-meeting held in the home of a United Brethren neighbor, Albright joined a Methodist class, which soon granted him an exhorter's license. In 1796 he became an itinerant, preaching to German people in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. His Methodist background probably was a factor which led him to organize his new converts into classes, thus making possible the continuation of the new movement after his premature death in 1808. The following year "Die sogenannten Albrechts Leute" ["The So-Called Albright's People," their official name from 1809 to 1816] adopted a discipline much like that of the Methodists. However, the name, Evangelische Gemeinschaft, which the denomination retained until 1922, was not adopted until 1816. Because of Albright's early demise the task of spreading the movement westward across the mountains fell to others--men converted under his ministry and dedicated to the preaching of a Gospel that aimed at revolutionizing the religious and moral orientation of their hearers.

Both the Church of the United Brethren in Christ and the Evangelical Association began as German-language movements ministering almost solely to first and second generation German immigrants. The Methodists might concentrate on English-speaking people; someone was needed to minister to the Germans.[1] Earliest preaching places were German settlements in eastern and south-central Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. When evangelists crossed the mountains, they went with the intention of contacting German

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[1]Methodists did begin a work in the German language about 1800. Henry Boehm, son of Martin Boehm, was one of three preachers commissioned to preach to German-speaking people (Raymond Albright, A History of the Evangelical Church [Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: The Evangelical Press, 1942], p. 68).

settlers moving westward from eastern Pennsylvania or to recently-arrived German immigrants. These were their parish. Had German immigration ceased, both denominations might have united with the Methodist Church as they became progressively Americanized. However, the great deluge of German immigration--1,380,000 between 1830 and 1860--provided an ongoing and demanding reason for being. Even so, United Brethren made the transition to English quite early.[1] By 1830 numerous ministers were working in the English language and had formed English congregations from Pennsylvania to Indiana. Evangelicals remained far more German, largely because of their unfortunate experience with English preachers. John Hamilton, one of the first Evangelicals to labor in the English language, was deposed for heresy and schismatic activities in 1831.[2] About the same time, the General Conference determined that only such preachers who could speak German would be received. Otherwise, they felt, a man's usefulness was too severely limited. Although this decision was reversed in 1843, these events led to the fixing of a German profile on the denomination. This prepared them uniquely for a ministry to the wave of immigrants from Germany in the pre-Civil War years, but many of the children of the old Evangelical families were alienated from the church. Use of the German language continued until World War I dictated its abandonment.[3] Throughout their history Evangelicals remained far more German than the United Brethren.

Led by the work and inspired by the example of Christian Newcomer, counterpart of the Methodists' Francis Asbury, United Brethren spread their

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[1]Don Yoder reports that United Brethren were dependent upon the Evangelicals for their German hymnody, but that they pioneered in the publication of English-language camp-meeting hymnals (p. 407).

[2]Albright, p. 137.

[3]Even now (1966) a few congregations hold services in German.

work rapidly to the westward in the opening years of the nineteenth-century. Congregations developed throughout rural areas of western Pennsylvania and Ohio, new annual conferences were formed, and by 1841 the denomination extended into Illinois. In that year the General Conference elected four bishops to supervise a rapidly-growing denomination which had passed the 25,000 mark. After four decades of existence Evangelicals numbered about 12,000. Like United Brethren, they confined their ministry almost entirely to rural areas.[1] Without a bishop since Albright's death in 1808, they elected John Seybert in 1839 to lead some one hundred itinerant ministers in a work that challenged their best energies. Only three conferences were in existence--East Pennsylvania, West Pennsylvania, and Ohio--but Evangelicals already were at work in upstate New York, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Michigan. As with their sister denomination, Evangelicals in these years were adopting Articles of Faith and a constitution, establishing publishing houses, and beginning to distribute their own periodicals. By 1841 both movements had all the earmarks of institutionalized denominations.

Evangelicals and United Brethren frequently are called "German Methodists," and with considerable justification, as their ethnic ties, organization and theological affirmations attest. Their aims, purposes, and revivalistic methods were practically identical to those of Methodists. Furthermore, relationships between both Evangelicals and United Brethren and the Methodists were close and cordial. Methodist itinerants often preached in Evangelical and United Brethren congregations, and vice versa. Otterbein was an intimate friend of Bishop Asbury and assisted in his consecration as Superintendent at the "Christmas Conference" in Baltimore in 1784,

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[1]H. Richard Niebuhr reports in The Social Sources of Denominationalism (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1929), p. 183, that as late as 1906 ninety-two per cent of United Brethren were located in rural areas.

when American Methodism officially became a separate denomination. Jacob Albright had united with a Methodist class shortly after his conversion. For two years (1807-1809) the Evangelicals' official name was "The Newly-Formed Methodist Conference."[1] Francis Asbury tried to persuade John Dreisbach, early Evangelical leader, to become a Methodist itinerant. Several times during their history these three churches have exerted efforts to achieve some form of organic union. From 1809 to 1814 Methodists and United Brethren exchanged cordialities and communications and made efforts to unite their work. From 1859 to 1871 Methodists and Evangelicals discussed the possibility of union. Evangelicals and United Brethren held a conference in 1817 which some leaders hoped would result in uniting them. None of these efforts was successful in its intent. Nonetheless, they testify to the close relations among these three denominations.[2]

Despite these affinities with Methodism, however, Evangelicals and United Brethren did not think of themselves simply as "German Methodists." The name is, therefore, misleading. Albright and his associates repeatedly denied that they were Methodists.[3] Except for the early years of both movements, they thought of themselves as quite separate denominations. From the very earliest days there has been no institutional tie between them. Denominations are far more than doctrine and polity. As Karl Adam Adam has written: "It is quite wrong to estimate a religion solely according to its conceptual content, or even according to this or that dominant idea alone, and not rather to regard the totality of the vital forms that

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[1]Albright, pp. 84-94.

[2]Evangelical United Brethren and Methodists have drawn up a plan for organic union that may be consummated in 1968.

[3]Albright, p. 67.

spring from it in past, present, and future."[1] Evangelicals and United Brethren had a quite separate denominational self-consciousness. They began to develop their own traditions; they acquired their own unique set of experiences as they carried out their ministry. Only by taking account of this tradition in its distinctive history can we understand and appreciate the unique "career" of theology among Evangelicals and United Brethren.

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[1]Karl Adam, The Spirit of Catholicism (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1954), p. 61.

II. THE THEOLOGICAL STANCE

As Evangelicals and United Brethren confronted the task of proclaiming the Christian message to a largely non-Christian society, they learned much from their revivalistic contemporaries and from the pietistic, Puritan, mystical, and Wesleyan literature they read. They gave them their own interpretation and application as the situation demanded, however, and with the passing years certain characteristic emphases came to occupy a central place in their life and thought.

1. Christian Experience

The central core of their convictions and the dominant note of their sermons was their commitment to the supreme importance of Christian experience, usually interpreted to accent the emotions. Evangelicals and United Brethren did not regard reason as the leading edge of the self. They were convinced that men and women did not become Christians in the cool detachment of the philosopher's armchair. Nor did it happen gradually, unconsciously, imperceptibly. To confront Christ squarely was to be convulsively converted, and this meant transformation of the whole man, not least of which were his feelings.[1]

So important are the "religious affections" that the journals of the early ministers are filled with accounts of the state of their religious

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[1]Cf. H. Richard Niebuhr's comments about American revivalists of the Great Awakenings in The Kingdom of God in America (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937, 1959), pp. 107-108.

feelings.[1] John Seybert, the Asbury of the Evangelicals, always recorded it as a mark of success when emotions were aroused and people wept or shouted, no matter whether they were converted or not.[2]

The religious feelings of the Christian could be used to prove the truth of certain Christian doctrines. Calvinism could be refuted by appealing to intuitive feelings:

> They believe every thing is fixed and settled immutably, and yet they exhort their fellow men, caution and warn them of their danger, and condemn their improper conduct, as though they believed in the reality of man's moral agency, as much as any of their Arminian brethren. These circumstances need not be wondered at; they only show our brethren's sense of justice and moral obligation are struggling against the dogmas of their speculative theology.[3]

Another enemy and competitor, Campbellism, failed to stress that faith is more than the assent of the mind; it must include also the "consent of the will" and the "reliance of the affections."[4] Evangelicals and United Brethren found it easy to assert that "ein Kind Gottes braucht zwar keine Beweisgründe mehr dasz Christus Gott sei, nein, es fühlt ihn in seiner Seele, als lebendige Gotteskraft."[5] "Religion of the heart" was decidedly

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[1]See John Seybert, Journal, trans. J. G. Eller, II (Saturday, June 29, 1822; Friday, July 5, 1822), 7-9. Ibid., V (Friday, June 26, 1829), 60. Cf. Joseph Harlacher, Journal, trans. J. G. Eller, Sunday, November 17, 1833, p. 81.

[2]On one occasion he wrote in his Journal, III (Friday, December 30, 1825), 41: "Roop requested that I have prayer with them and as I prayed the power of God came upon us so that the servant girl who also was present was weeping very bitterly." Cf. Ibid., II (Wednesday, June 26, 1822), 7.

[3]Religious Telescope, June 1, 1836, p. 45. The Religious Telescope is hereafter cited as RT.

[4]RT, May 6, 1835, p. 40.

[5]Der Christliche Botschafter, II (July, 1837), 49. Der Christliche Botschafter is hereafter cited as CB. "Indeed, a child of God needs no further argument that Christ is God than that he feels him in his soul as the living power of God."

JOHN SEYBERT

(Courtesy of Evangelical Theological Seminary, Naperville, Illinois)

superior to "religion of the head."[1]

"Heart religion" occasionally became noisy and boisterous in its expression. The colorful and extensive literature of "bush-meeting spirituals" they created and sang added to the emotional fervor of their meetings.[2] Some defended loud worship as Scriptural,[3] but others felt that their fellow Christians went much too far in unrestricted emotionalism.[4] One of the best minds in the early years, the Rev. Jacob Vogelbach, left the Evangelical Association because "some of the members opposed him for the opposition he took in his preaching against the loud, open demonstration in public service."[5] Jacob Albright himself warned against excesses in emotionalism both among clergy and laity.[6] But his criticism was aimed at excesses only. Both Evangelicals and United Brethren generally accepted

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[1]In the very first issue of the Botschafter "Ein Wink an Prediger" (CB, I [January, 1836], 4), warns against relying on "Kopf-Wissenschaft" without "das Herz voll von der Liebe und Gnade Gottes."

[2]In his Pennsylvania Spirituals Don Yoder has written a fascinating account of the folk hymns and choruses which were an integral part of the worship of the Bush-Meeting Dutch--the United Brethren, the Evangelical Association, the Church of God, and groups they produced "by schism and example" (p. 12).

[3]RT, April 4, 1838, p. 26. RT, April 29, 1840, p. 33. "Schriftmäßiger lauter Gottesdienst," CB, IV (November, 1839), 87-88.

[4]J. C. Winter exhorted in "A Peep at the Pulpit or Sacred Desk" (RT, April 17, 1839, p. 30):

> "In speaking about the love of Christ, the conversion of sinners, and the resurrection of the dead, they halloo, jump, stamp, and pound the stand with their fist, speaking half-articulated words, so that the congregation cannot understand more than the one-third they say. I fancy, I hear one say, we must make great allowance for young preachers, (and say nothing about old ones who have the same habit.) To this I do agree, in part; as to young preachers, not having practice in connecting and explaining scripture, there must be an allowance made. But, as to old and young preachers using bad habits in the pulpit, in this advanced state of the world, there is no allowance to be made."

[5]Seybert, XI (July 8, 1840), 36.

[6]Albright, p. 53.

and expected the free and uninhibited expression of one's repentant and loving response to God. They welcomed any testimony that glorified the feelings over the intellect.[1]

Instantaneous conversion.--The kind of experience on which they laid the greatest stress was the conversion experience, and they expected it to occur instantaneously. This was the primary distinguishing mark of true Christians. Evangelicals and United Brethren vividly celebrated their convictions in one of their early choruses:

> Baikiring iss des beshta varrick,
> Baikiring iss des beshta varrick,
> Baikiring iss des beshta varrick,
> Ich feel's in meinra sail.[2]

Only those who had pressed into the Kingdom by this means were genuine members of it.[3] The denominational histories and biographies of early leaders recount in detail the conversions of the founders--Otterbein, Boehm, and Albright.[4] The importance of conversion also is evident in two of the questions put to applicants for license to preach:

> Have you found God in Christ to be sin-pardoning, and yourself experienced your sins?
> Have you peace with God, and is the love of God, through the Holy Spirit, shed abroad in your heart?[5]

The necessity of "plötzliche Bekehrungen" was the theme of many sermons,

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[1]An article in the Religious Telescope, October 3, 1838, p. 79, notes that a certain skeptic admitted on his deathbed that although his intellect led him to disbelieve in religion, his feelings led him to feel that religion's "dictates are those of eternal truth."

[2]Yoder, p. 192. "Conversion is the best work, . . . I feel it in my soul."

[3]Cf. Drury, History, pp. 153, 248.

[4]Ibid., pp. 57-58. Ibid., pp. 97-98. Albright, pp. 37-38.

[5]"General Conference Journal, 1825," Extracts from the Written Journal of the Proceedings of the General Conference of the United Brethren in Christ, from 1815 to 1873 inclusive (Dayton, Ohio: United Brethren Publishing House, 1890), p. 5.

and all the early leaders defended it frequently.[1] No gradualism here!

Assurance.--The expectation was that the conversion experience would issue in assurance, a certainty that one had effectively made peace with God and was now acceptable to Him. Otterbein held that "a joyful and assured knowledge of salvation" was necessary for the "proper joy and comfort of believers;" to deny the possibility of this assurance was to go contrary to Scripture and "to cast away the essential consistency of Christianity."[2] Joseph Harlacher, an Evangelical itinerant, recorded in his journal

> a conversation with an old stiffnecked blind Lutheran who came to Michael's. He would not grant it that one can know that he is a child of God, but finally he yielded as I convinced him by the scriptures. At first he was stubborn as I rejected his Lutheran faith and as I approached him with the word of God, he gave way.[3]

Assurance of present salvation was an integral part of God's good gift bestowed upon every converted child of God.

Human depravity.--The exhortation to seek conversion was based on the belief that man was in desperate need of salvation from his sins, and this was a conviction that dominated the preaching of ministers in the early years of both denominations. They themselves had experienced deep conviction of personal sinfulness, and they faithfully proclaimed man's need for salvation from his sins in their sermons.[4] The statement that Bishop

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[1] CB, May 1, 1840, p. 72. Albright, pp. 106-107. Samuel P. Spreng, The Life and Labors of John Seybert (Cleveland, Ohio: Lauer and Mattill, 1888), p. 360. Drury, History, p. 248. "Der Geist der Wahrheit, und der Geist des Irrthums," CB, June 1, 1841, pp. 83-84. The Telescope approved of President Mahan of Oberlin because his "energies seem bent for the conversion of sinners and the perfection of believers in the work of holiness" (RT, December 22, 1841, p. 85).

[2] Drury, History, p. 247. Ibid., pp. 61-62. Paul H. Eller, These Evangelical United Brethren (Dayton, Ohio: The Otterbein Press, 1950), p. 31.

[3] Harlacher, Friday, September 20, 1833, p. 68.

[4] See Albright, p. 31, for an account of the experiences of Jacob Albright. See Drury, History, p. 153, for Newcomer's account of the

Long's favorite theme in preaching was the plan of salvation, according to which he "spoke of the great depravity of the human race,"[1] could apply equally well to most of his colleagues. In 1839 the Evangelical Association reprinted Fletcher's Appeal in order to protect and bolster the doctrine of depravity.[2] The sinfulness of man was a doctrine central to the faith of the denomination, for it was integral to the whole effort of converting sinners in the quarterly meetings, grosse Versammlungen, camp meetings, and revivals in which they continually were engaged.[3]

Evangelistic efforts.--The means whereby men experienced conversion and the resulting assurance received a great deal of attention. Detailed reports of revivals and camp meetings as well as advice and counsel for promoting them were frequent features in the denominational journals.[4] A later historian confidently asserted that this was the principal reason for the very existence of the denomination:

> Evangelization was the watchword. The one great and burning desire of our early evangelists was to bring sinners to Christ. The moral

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sermon content and the effect of the preaching of Otterbein and his associate, George Geeting.

[1]Reuben Yeakel, Bishop Joseph Long (Cleveland, Ohio: Publishing House of the Evangelical Association, 1897), p. 177.

[2]Albright, p. 209.

[3]See "Ursachen des Unglaubens," CB, January 1, 1841, p. 3. A reprint of an article from the Christian Advocate and Journal (RT, May 20, 1835, p. 41) criticized Finney's "natural ability" doctrine, espousing instead the Methodist doctrine of "gracious ability;" according to Leland Scott in "Methodist Theology in the Nineteenth Century" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of Religion, Yale University, 1955), p. 48, Nathan Bangs probably was the first to use the term. Cf. RT, June 3, 1835, p. 46. Cf. Thomas Buck, "Fall des Menschen," CB, I (February, 1836), p. 9. Cf. "Hässlichkeit und Schrecklichkeit der Sünde," CB, I (November, 1836), p. 86.

[4]Camp meetings were begun in the Evangelical Association in 1810 and among the United Brethren in 1815 (Albright, p. 99; Drury, History, p. 363). See CB, III (August, September, 1838), 58-59, 66-67.

> condition of the people, with whom our early preachers came in contact, demanded special emphasis of the practical and experimental side of religion. . . . Without this predominating aim--evangelization--which is a true apostolic spirit, there would be no good reasons for her existence.[1]

The revival, of course, was not unique to Evangelicals and United Brethren. Most of American Protestantism was using it to reach the unchurched. In the first several decades of the nineteenth-century revivalism spread rapidly even within the Lutheran Church.[2] When several denominations began to establish theological seminaries, such men as Lyman Beecher held that one of their primary tasks, if not the most important, was to be "nurseries of revivals."[3]

The dedication to evangelism evident in the preoccupation with revivals also provided the impulse that transported the church westward across the mountains. The two most energetic agents of this westward movement of the church were Christian Newcomer and John Seybert. Pennsylvania-born and of Swiss ancestry, Newcomer came from Mennonite background. Under his leadership United Brethren became an organized movement. His journal tells of more than fifty trips across the Appalachians on horseback, all undertaken after he was fifty years of age.[4]

In the years after Albright's death the Evangelical Association owes

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[1]Ammon Stapleton, Annals of The Evangelical Association of North America and History of the United Evangelical Church (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Publishing House of the United Evangelical Church, 1900), p. 165. Cf. Paul H. Eller, "Revivalism and the German Churches in Pennsylvania, 1783-1816," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of Church History, University of Chicago, 1933).

[2]Henry E. Jacobs, A History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States (New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1893), p. 369.

[3]William W. Sweet, Religion in the Development of American Culture, 1765-1840 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952), p. 182.

[4]Drury, History, p. 291; Eller, These Evangelical United Brethren, p. 57.

its life to the untiring endeavors of John Seybert more than to any other man. Unmarried, eccentric, simple in dress, he travelled 175,000 miles--mostly on horseback--during his forty years of selfless service. Seybert preached 9,850 times, conducted 8000 class and prayer meetings, made over 50,000 pastoral visits as he ministered diligently and untiringly.[1] These two men became models for the host of circuit-riders responsible for the rapid expansion of these movements.

The overcoming of sin.--The victorious deathbed testimony was valued highly, for it served to document the fundamental principles of the movements. John Dreisbach, early Evangelical leader, translated a portion of Thomas Dick's work, Future State, calling it "Vom Genusz der Glückseligkeit der Seligen in jener Welt, und der Frommen Verlangen dahin."[2] The appearance of this small piece on March 9, 1841, is probably not unrelated to the death of Samuel Dreisbach's wife less than a month before.[3]

In their day-to-day contacts with the "unconverted" these early preachers contended that man could avoid sinning. One circuit rider engaged in this spirited argument with a "defeatist" he encountered in his travels:

> I told him, that if he had religion, perhaps he could live better, but he did not know what genuine religion is. I sought to make it plain to him, but he would not believe it, saying that he commits sins every day and that no man on earth lives who does not sin daily. Then I asked him, why man cannot live without sinning, since it is not God's will? . . . He answered, but no one can become so perfect in this world for he must sin every day. But my dear friend, said I, how do you expect to stand before the righteous judgment seat of Christ if you are still a sinner? He had no answer, and broke out weeping, saying, pray for

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[1] Albright, p. 261.

[2] CB, April 16, 1841, p. 58. "Concerning the enjoyment of blessedness of the saved in heaven, and the longing of the pious for it."

[3] CB, April 1, 1841, p. 56.

me. Yes, I said, I will pray that God shall enlighten your darkened understanding that you shall see whose spiritual child you are.[1]

Despite their humble social standing and modest material resources, these early Evangelicals and United Brethren exhibited an air of success. They were convinced that a Christian could live above sin, and their sermons and pronouncements were full of this conviction. For them, as with their Wesleyan and pietistic forebears, Christianity was a success story, at least with regard to sin and its conquest. They expected the child of God to overcome his depravity and abstain from sin, for man was a free moral being who did not need to accept defeat in the moral and religious realm. God demanded holiness, and common sense decreed that what God commanded man obviously could fulfill. The preachments of the evangelists ran counter to any theology which gave the slightest comfort to sinners who felt at ease about their sinful condition--or to believers who were not going on to perfection. This was a call for moral and spiritual revolution of such magnitude that its effect would be clearly evident in the life of the persons in whom it occurred. Furthermore, these men did not lack confidence that they were correct in their understanding of the processes of salvation.

The importance of meditation.--A great emphasis on private meditation in order to cultivate pious feelings and to incite believers to lives of good works was compatible with this accent on the individual and his salvation. John Arndt had strongly advocated a devotional reading of the

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[1]Harlacher, Journal, December 14, 1833, pp. 86-87. John Dreisbach writes that he "had a long conversation with Zimmerman, a miller, and father in this home. My purpose was to convince him of the genuine Christianity, and that we, by grace, can overcome all sin and live holy lives, if we would please our God" (Day Book, trans. J. G. Eller, IV [June 13, 1815], p. 5).

Bible each morning, and these people were his avid devotees.[1] Such men as John Dreisbach recorded in their journals their regular observance of periods of meditation and devotion.[2] That regular times of prayer and meditation were an important part of the life of John Walter is evident from a letter to his wife in which this itinerant wrote:

> My soul pours itself out daily for you in prayer. At the throne of grace you can daily meet me, at least in the morning, at noon, and in the evening, even though we must be separated in body.[3]

As early as 1809 a conference of the Evangelical Association (then called "The So-Called Albright's People") requested Walter's associate, George Miller, to prepare devotional material for use among the members of the fellowship.[4] The cultivation of meditation was an important part of the new movement.

Frequently articles appeared in the periodicals advocating private and family devotions and suggesting the use of à Kempis, Edwards on the Religious Affections, Leighton, Howe, Meade, Owen, and Flavel.[5] One adviser warned that even the reading of good books can be vain if it hinders

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[1]John Arndt, True Christianity, ed. William Jaques (London: Booth and Co., 1815), I, 345. Infra,

[2]In one entry he expressed regret that he had allowed himself "to be kept too much from reading, meditating and praying, through chattering with friends and acquaintances" (Dreisbach, Day Book, trans. Frederick Siebert and Ralph K. Schwab, I [May 10, 1813], 5). On another day he commented that he had read his Bible "with prayerful pleadings for a proper understanding to reach the full content of the Word" (Ibid., trans. J. G. Eller, II [March 19, 1814], 38).

[3]Reuben Yeakel, Jacob Albright and His Co-Laborers (Cleveland, Ohio: Publishing House of the Evangelical Association, 1883), p. 159.

[4]Albright, p. 94.

[5]RT, August 10, 1836, p. 67. "How Can I Keep Alive a Spirit of Piety?" (RT, August 8, 1838, p. 61) gives this three-fold answer to the question in the title: "1. Live at the throne of grace. 2. habitual and daily self-examination. 3. give a careful and prayerful attention to the perusal of the Word of God." Cf. "Self-Examination," RT, August 8, 1838, p. 61.

reflection and meditation.[1] Family worship, like private devotions, was promoted.[2] Church members were strongly urged to avail themselves regularly of both of these varieties of Christian experience.

2. Criteria for the Evaluation of Christian Experience

Early Evangelicals and United Brethren had no desire to promulgate a new form of Christianity. Their convictions, attitudes and practices were shaped by the broad currents of Methodism and Pietism. In most ways they adapted this tradition to their needs. These practical-minded German farmers and artisans invented no new criteria for evaluating the validity of a person's "Christian experience." Scripture, common sense, and good works provided the threefold test which any plain man could employ.

Scripture.--A thorough knowledge of the Bible was regarded as the primary necessity for the pioneer preacher. In many cases his library consisted of the Bible, a hymnbook, and the discipline. Some were convinced that a knowledge of the Bible, together with a warm heart in touch with God through prayer, was all a preacher needed. One ministerial student who went to Gettysburg Theological Seminary soon returned home to devote himself exclusively to the study of the Scriptures.[3] The statement that Jacob Albright was "a thorough student of the Bible and consequently based much of his preaching directly on the Scriptures" was true of almost every

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[1] "Reading not Knowledge," RT, March 18, 1840, p. 23.

[2] A sermon by Wesley on family worship was used in CB, October 15, 1840, pp. 153-54. See "Die Kenntnisz der heilige Schrift," CB, September 1, 1840, p. 134. Cf. CB, June 15, 1840, p. 95.

[3] John Lawrence, History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ (Dayton, Ohio: United Brethren in Christ Printing Establishment, 1868), II, 231.

preacher.[1]

Consistent with their pietistic heritage, both denominations gave a prominent place to the Bible in their Statements of Faith. The United Brethren Confession had only five brief articles, the fourth of which dealt entirely with the Bible. Thus, in its brevity the Confession was unlike the great confessions of the Reformation era or even the Methodist Articles of Religion. Furthermore, the wording of the fourth article does not bear striking similarity to any of the major confessions.[2] It reflects more concern for true experience than pure doctrine:

> We believe that the Bible is the word of God; that it contains the true way to our souls' well-being and salvation; that every true Christian is bound to acknowledge and receive it, with the influences of the Spirit of God, as his only rule and guide; and that without repentance, faith in Jesus Christ, forgiveness of sins, and following after Jesus Christ, no one can be a true Christian.[3]

With very minor changes, this remained the official statement down to 1889, when the Constitution and the Confession of Faith were revised.

The ancestry of the Evangelicals' statement on Scripture is much easier to trace. Tradition holds that George Miller wrote the discipline in response to a dream in which he had said that "unless God would write it

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[1]Albright, p. 57. See Allan H. Zagray, "John Seybert's Use of the Bible" (unpublished B.D. thesis, Evangelical Theological Seminary, 1957).

[2]Paul Eller says in These Evangelical United Brethren, p. 120, that some have seen Moravian influence in the reference to the double guidance of the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit. Probably the Second Helvetic Confession and the Westminster Confession in their mention of "the inward illumination of the Spirit" provided sufficient precedent, so that one need look no further for possible sources of influence ("The Westminster Confession of Faith," Chapter I, Article VI, Creeds of Christendom, ed. Philip Schaff [New York: Harper and Brothers, 1877], III, 603); ("The Second Helvetic Confession," Chapter I, ibid., III, 832).

[3]Drury, History, pp. 282-283. It is also in A. W. Drury (ed.), Disciplines of the United Brethren in Christ (Dayton, Ohio: U. B. Publishing House, 1895), Part I, p. 3.

upon my heart, I could not complete it."[1] Eller remarks, however, that if "the Lord wrote upon his heart what he should include in the discipline, it would appear that the Lord was well acquainted with the Methodist discipline."[2] Articles V and VI, which deal with Holy Scripture, and their Methodist counterparts are nearly identical.[3]

The regard which early United Brethren had for the Bible is evident in the confession of Christopher Grosch, dating to 1812. The seventh article deals with Holy Scripture and is a simple statement which declares the author's faith that the Bible is the best book in the world, that it had and would continue to survive despite attacks upon it, that it is without deficiency or mistake, and that it is the constitution for all true Christians.[4] It is the simple statement of a pioneer minister without a great deal of education, but it exudes warm-hearted confidence in the Bible as his very practical guide for life.[5]

In the United Brethren Church no catechism appeared until 1880. The leaders of the church were convinced that the Bible was sufficient for the

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[1]Yeakel, Co-Laborers, pp. 240ff.

[2]Paul Eller, "Development of the Denominational Consciousness of the Albright Brethren" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Chicago, 1930), pp. 43-44.

[3]The Twenty-five Articles of Religion of the Methodist Episcopal Church were derived almost equally directly from the Thirty-nine Articles of the Anglican Church, and these are in some ways a remarkable balance of catholic and reformation themes.

[4]Christopher Grosch, Ein Schlüssel Heiliger Schrift und der so höchstnöthigen Erkenntnisz--Christlicher Lebens Regel (Microfilm Roll # 24, United Theological Seminary Library, Dayton, Ohio; originally published in Ephrata, Pennsylvania: Joseph Bauman, 1830).

[5]Cf. "Die Heilige Schrift ist ein edler Schatz," CB, February 15, 1840, pp. 31-32, which expresses happy approval of the recent General Conference action to make arrangements for printing a Bible in their publishing house.

instruction of youth and new converts.[1] The Evangelical Church, on the other hand, approved of catechetical instruction. As early as the fourth annual conference in 1811, preachers were instructed to form classes in catechism on their circuits.[2] The first catechism was a small one translated into the German by John Dreisbach in 1808 or 1809. It had gone through three editions by 1818.[3] It contained no article or question on the Bible, but every question was answered by a Biblical quotation with no other comment.[4] In 1839 the denomination published a simpler catechism prepared especially for children from five to eight years of age. The seventeenth and eighteenth questions and answers are as follows:

> Wo finden wir das, was Er uns gelehret hat? In der Bibel.
> Ist die Bibel demnach nicht das beste und vornehmste Buch in der Welt?[5]

The catechism did not take the place of Scripture; it rather called attention to the Bible's foremost place.

Like other pietists before them, Evangelicals and United Brethren earnestly and avidly defended the Bible against all comers. One such defense was a well-written series of articles on the threat of rationalism. In these essays the author, Jacob Vogelbach, frequently refers to rationalistic attitudes towards the Bible. He states, for instance, that the

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[1]See John Lawrence's reply to a correspondent in RT, March 3, 1852, p. 106.

[2]Albright, p. 216. [3]Ibid.

[4]Der kleine biblische Catechismus (Dritte Auflage; Neu-Berlin: Pennsylvania: Salomon Miller und Henrich Niebel, 1818).

[5]Catechismus für Kleine Kinder, zum Gebrauch in Sonntagschulen; enthaltend Die wichtigsten Fragen und Antworten über die Angangs-Grunde der christlichen Religion (Neu-Berlin, Pennsylvania: S. G. Miller, Drucker, 1839). "Where do we find what He has taught us? In the Bible. Therefore is the Bible not the best and noblest book in the world?" No answer is provided for the eighteenth question.

> first teaching is that man needs to believe only that which he can grasp and understand with the reason. Because the Bible or God's Word contains much that is beyond man's reason, and the speculative spirit of man cannot penetrate the secret counsel of God and his wonderful arrangements, they therefore reach the conclusion that one does not need to believe it. They even go further and seek to debase the Bible through pretexts not pleasing to God, briefly presenting it as a book of human invention.[1]

In defending the doctrine of the fall of man and the redemption through Christ he contends that the rationalistic approach to these matters "is set forth in bombastic, pompous words, deriding all the sacredness and the venerability of the Bible and giving way to the scornful laughter of the mocking multitude."[2] Permeating Vogelbach's writing is a sensitivity to anything that looks like an attack on the Bible.[3]

On most occasions the Bible was used and quoted uncritically; often preachers lifted out of context a verse which seemed adaptable to the occasion. Although there are some examples of incipient Biblical criticism, which show that a defensive attitude towards the Scriptures was not universal,[4] the approach to the Bible generally was one of uncritical and literalistic acceptance.[5] Their attitude towards it suggests that they believed revelation constituted only a past mode of God's activity. God, of course,

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[1]Jacob Vogelbach, "Rationalismus, Vernunftglaube, Unglaube," CB, IV (July, 1839), 50-51.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Cf. "Editorial," CB, IV (July, 1839), 52, which calls attention to the importance of this article, particularly the portion that points out the dangerous rationalistic teaching that the Bible is only a human invention.

[4]"Biblical Criticism," RT, May 27, 1840, p. 42. "Unterschied zwischen biblischen Thatsachen und biblischen Pflichten," CB, I (February, 1836), 11-12. See Jacob Vogelbach, "Von der Bildersprache der heiligen Schrift," CB, III (June, July, August, September, 1838), 43-44, 50-51, 57-58, 65-66.

[5]See John Seybert, "Sermon on Job," contained in Spreng, Seybert, esp. p. 394.

is still active, but not in revelation; that is completed. He is now active only in his redemptive work--saving sinners and sanctifying believers. Therefore, one receives knowledge of God only through the Scriptures. Saving knowledge of God, the knowledge that God has done something for a person, comes through experience, of course. Only in the former, however, is one really dealing with revelation.[1]

Common sense.--Early preachers frequently appealed to the level of rational process we usually call "common sense." Sometimes they yoked Scripture and common sense in arguments for the defense of the faith.[2] In Butlerian fashion they refuted infidels and deists by means of their own tools--simple logic and common sense.[3] Universalism also was attacked in this manner.[4] These defenders of the faith were careful to speak clearly and simply in their sermons, taking some pride in being methodical and logical so that the simple man who operated only at the level of common sense could understand.[5]

What place reason should occupy in Christian theology was not clear. On the one hand, the limitations of human reason were duly noted and

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[1]The defensive rejection of almost all biblical criticism here recorded does not seem entirely consistent with the article on Scripture in the United Brethren Confession of Faith which does not emphasize the Bible as an object of revelation, but rather sees the Bible as revelatory when correlated with the work of the Spirit. Supra, p. 20.

[2]See L.S.G.'s defense of the divinity of Christ (RT, March 7, 1838, p. 17). Cf. an article which criticizes Roman Catholic doctrine in RT, November 16, 1836, p. 94. Cf. Asa Coho, "Mysterious Deity, or, The Triune God," RT, September 20, 1837, p. 73.

[3]RT, May 3, 1837, pp. 34-35. "An Appeal to Reason," RT, December 26, 1838, p. 102. Bishop Joseph Butler's (1692-1752) Analogy of Religion (1736) was a rationalistic refutation of deism and atheism.

[4]"A Few Thoughts on Universalism," RT, June 13, 1838, p. 45.

[5]Albright, pp. 55, 58.

underlined; the natural rational processes of a man certainly could not be trusted ultimately.[1] On the other hand, some pointed out the necessity of reason even in a Christian's thinking about God. This ambivalence often is evident in the same person. One Evangelical asserted that man is a rational creature, that, Vernunft cannot be contradicted; yet he argued that the doctrine of the Trinity can be accepted without venturing to ask how such things can happen.[2] After extolling Vernunft one commentator conceded that "wenn ich nur dich behalte, o mein Schöpfer und HErr, so habe ich genug. Lieber will ich in vielen Stücken unwissend bleiben, als ohne dich in ewiger Dunkelheit und quälender Ungewiszheit meine Tage hinbringen."[3]

This ambiguity is evident in Jacob Vogelbach's able writing.[4] His message is that "the Bible or God's Word contains much that is beyond man's reason, and the speculative spirit of man cannot penetrate the secret counsel of God and his wonderful arrangements."[5] Yet he utilizes arguments by which he clearly means to appeal to the ratiocinations of his readers. These are mostly of the "common sense" variety, appealing to simple logic and raking sarcastically those who pretentiously flaunt their intelligence and their elaborate arguments.[6]

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[1] S. Joseph, in discussing "The Possibility and Necessity of Revelation," RT, May 13, 1840, p. 40, asserted that "the inability of human reason to form a perfect system of religion, and to enforce known obligation by proper sanctions; and the condition of man as a sinner, which renders the knowledge of natural law insufficient for him, strongly argues the necessity of revelation." (Italics mine.) An article taken from the Christlichen Apologeten contrasts Vernunft, which is "das Licht der Weltweisen," with Glaube, which is "das Licht der Christen" ("Erfahrnes Christenthum," CB, May 1, 1841), pp. 67-68.

[2] J. Godkin, "Die Dreieinigkeit," CB, February 1, 1840, p. 20.

[3] "Ueber die Existenz GOttes," CB, October 1, 1840, pp. 145-146. "If I but keep you, O my Creator and Lord, it is enough. Rather would I remain ignorant of many things than to spend my days without you in eternal darkness and vexing uncertainty."

[4] Supra, p. 23. [5] Vogelbach, CB, IV, 50-1. [6] Ibid., IV, 50-1, 58, 65-6.

One aspect of this appeal to common sense arguments is the close relationship and easy confidence these people had in nature. The evidence of God's handiwork in nature was a powerful argument in favor of the truth of Christianity, for it made such a universal appeal to people who lived most of their lives in the out-of-doors and to whom life was generally good. The soil on which most of these folk settled in Pennsylvania and Ohio was good, and these thrifty Germans found nature and the good earth to be bountiful and generous allies in their efforts to supply their physical needs.[1] Nature could be trusted to lead one to God.

An appeal to common sense thus took its place alongside Scripture as a means of documenting the validity of Christian experience. You could trust man's mind if he did not pretend to know more than God and his revealed Word, for it was a part of God's good creation, all of which was eloquent testimony to the existence and beneficence of God. Evangelicals and United Brethren were in step with what Timothy Smith called a pervasive viewpoint of nineteenth-century revivalistic groups--the conviction that the beliefs and practices of the mass of ordinary men are the most important.[2]

Good works.--The third criterion for testing the validity of religious experience was good works. The primacy of ethics over dogma so distinctive of Protestantism in nineteenth-century America is conspicuous here, too. Evangelicals and United Brethren were convinced that

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[1]See "Beweise der Güte GOttes aus den Werken der Schöpfung," CB, II (May, 1837), p. 40; "Weisheit GOttes in dem ganzen Zusammenhang der Natur," CB, II (November, 1837), p. 85; RT, August 23, 1837, p. 65; Joseph Harlacher, "Der Schöpfer," CB, July 1, 1841, pp. 97-98.

[2]Timothy L. Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America (New York: Abingdon Press, 1957), p. 9.

> the very best of all arguments for the Christian religion itself, is found in its power to reform the sinner. In fact, it is the only argument which has any extensive influence upon the mass of mankind. And so in regard to the various views of Christianity; learned men may conduct the theological controversy as they will, but the people will incline to the side on which is found the greatest moral power in doing good. The best way therefore, to establish truth, is not to dispute about it as a matter of argument, but to demonstrate by actual trial in the face of the community its moral power. . . .
>
> No one will, we trust, suppose from these remarks, that we disapprove altogether of religious discussions. The defence of Christianity is unquestionably a duty which the church ought to see faithfully performed. The only position we mean to assume is that the business of the ministry, is to do good with the truth, not to dispute about it.[1]

George Miller, venerated compiler of the Evangelical discipline, expressed this concern for practical reform in his Thätigen Christenthum [Practical Christianity], which went through at least three editions, all authorized by the denomination. This was an approval which few doctrinal books have been given in the history of the denomination. Miller's book was a call to live a devout life, and it specified what such a life should consist of.[2] Pervading the entire work is the stanch conviction that no one need remain unchanged in life and at the mercy of his propensities to evil. "It is a privilege and within the reach of every regenerated person--although a mere babe in Christ Jesus--to overcome all the enemies of his soul by the help of God."[3] Radical changes were frequent enough in the converts of these pioneer evangelists that they became the norm, as for instance, the action of a man who converted his stillhouse into a house for

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[1]"A Test of Doctrines," RT, August 22, 1838, p. 68. Also see "Die Ausübung ist dem Hören vorzuziehen," CB, II (June, 1837), 47.

[2]George Miller, Practical Christianity, or, Short and Plain Doctrines Setting Forth True Godliness (Cleveland, Ohio: Evangelical Association [1871], p. 67.

[3]Ibid., p. 39. Also see Spreng, Seybert, p. 415.

worship and erected a pulpit near "where the kettles stood."[1]

Rigid discipline of both laymen and ministers was practiced from the beginning of both movements. Members often were dropped from the class records for neglect of duty, disobeying the discipline, and other irregularities. In Otterbein's first pastorate at Lancaster, Pennsylvania, from 1752 to 1758, he instituted strict discipline which called for individual examination of each member prior to the celebration of Holy Communion.[2] Each annual conference carefully examined the conduct of each minister. Sometimes this lasted several days and constituted the main business of the session.[3] Enough ministers were guilty of moral irregularities and unwise administration of their charges that careful supervision and examination of them was not only a matter of religious conviction but also of practical necessity.[4] Eventually, though, this established for both churches a reputation for integrity which contributed to their growth and helped to counteract the losses which resulted from the strict discipline of the membership.

The new temperance movement made an appeal to these people with their concern to reform the moral behavior of their German neighbors. Bishop Seybert became an active participant, lecturing many times on behalf of the

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[1]Samuel S. Hough, Christian Newcomer, His Life, Journal and Achievements (Dayton, Ohio: Board of Administration of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, 1941), p. 233.

[2]Drury, History, pp. 56, 124-131, 283-285. See also Albright, pp. 120, 141.

[3]See Extracts from the Written Journal of the Proceedings of the General Conference of the United Brethren in Christ, from 1815 to 1873 inclusive, May 15, 1817, p. 2.

[4]Albright, pp. 135-141. Indeed, widespread clerical laxity was a factor in the discontent which led to the founding and early growth of these two denominations.

cause. His activity began late in 1837 in Allentown, Pennsylvania, where he induced thirty people to join the society after his first address.[1]

It is not surprising that this concern for moral reform and the performance of good deeds came to have an ascetic angle. Albright himself demonstrated such tendencies:

> I also endeavored to consecrate my body entirely to the service of God, so that no passion, desire or love of ease should obstruct or hinder me in my course; . . . Therefore I fasted for weeks, in the beginning, so that my body was often overheated and inflamed that I was compelled to bathe in cold water, in order to allay the inflammation. I did everything in my power to crucify my affections and lusts, so that the flesh might not reign in me, but the Spirit of Christ. God blessed my efforts so powerfully, that my heart was constantly lifted up to him and received strength to keep myself temperate in all things, to love God supremely, and my neighbor as myself.[2]

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[1]Seybert, Journal, X (November 1, 1837), 24. Clifford S. Griffin tells of the rise of the temperance movement in Their Brothers' Keepers (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1960).

[2]Albright, p. 43, citing George Miller, Leben, Erfahrung und Amtsführung zweyer Evangelischer Prediger, Jakob Albrecht und Georg Miller (New Berlin, Pennsylvania, 1834), pp. 24-25. The opposition of Albright's wife to his work may have been a factor in his asceticism, although this is not confirmed. Yeakel, Co-Laborers, p. 14, writes:

> "The widow of Albright died in 1828. She lived and died a member of the Reformed Church. With the work, and especially with the great self-denial of her husband, she had no sympathy and was the cause of adding many hours of suffering to his other heavy crosses, to which, of course, the slanders that were fabricated against him by the enemies of Christianity contributed not a little."

Albright, p. 87, relying on a statement of Mary Raidabaugh Albright, the daughter-in-law of Jacob Albright, writes: "Jacob Albright's widow spent her last days with her son David and his wife Mary on a portion of the original farm, and died in 1828, a member of the church her husband had founded."

John Dreisbach recorded in his Day Book, I (July 2, 1813), p. 21, that "I still feel that my flesh is not all together deadened. I feel that I must still use earnest measures to deny myself and to die unto myself, so that I might live more fully in God." Perhaps the same solicitude animated his attempt to stop a dance:

> "As we were coming riding along the way this evening, there was a frolic in a home. I called in, 'Death, Judgment, and Eternity are near. Woe, woe, be to the ungodly.' They stopped for a few moments, but soon the devil encouraged them to continue" (Ibid., trans. J. G. Eller, V [Saturday, December 28, 1816], 52).

See also "Kleidung, Verschwendung u.s.w.," CB, April 16, 1840, p. 63.

John Seybert's entire life is a commentary on his conviction of the worth of the ascetic life. His decision to remain unmarried was not the fruit of a Gnostic depreciation of the flesh. It was, on the contrary, a vocational asceticism which the rigors of his itinerant ministry demanded. The impression is hard to avoid, however, that Seybert came to feel that this kind of life was essentially better, not so much because of the importance of the vocation, but because the denial of fleshly desires was an essentially virtuous act.

The Donatist view of the ministry which arose manifests clearly the dedication to good works.[1] George Miller's influential book stressed the importance of an exemplary ministry, noting that "if a Minister of the Gospel is not in the proper state of grace and faith himself, he can not invite others there unto."[2] In fact, "God has committed the office of an evangelical preacher to men who are spiritually alive, and not to unconverted and sleeping sinners."[3] A man's spiritual health qualified him to minister to others, not a ceremony of ordination administered by someone with "official" authorization.

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[1] Infra, pp. 32, 43.

[2] Miller, Practical Christianity, p. 52.

[3] Ibid., p. 55.

III. THE TRAINING OF A MINISTER

The Fear of Education

The gospel which early Evangelicals and United Brethren proclaimed was a simple message. Like Wesley, they desired "plain truth for plain people."[1] The stress on emotional experience and the lay character of these movements strengthened this tendency to simplify the gospel. Furthermore, they were ministering to people whose time and efforts were completely occupied with carving a living out of a wilderness. Therefore, questions of orthodoxy and efforts at theological precision did not seem as important as the winning of souls.

Attitudes towards ministerial training reflect this simplification of the gospel. Both churches agreed that formal theological training for the ministry was not only unnecessary, but often detrimental. The business of the preacher had little to do with intellectual and theological matters, as the United Brethren Discipline of 1833 states clearly:

> Let your business be to save as many souls as possible; to this employment give yourself up wholly. Visit those who need it, and act in all things not according to your own will, but as a son in the gospel. As such it becomes your duty to employ your time in the manner here prescribed: in preaching, and visiting from house to house; in instruction and prayer, and in meditating on the word of God; with these be occupied until our Lord cometh.[2]

Harsh criticism often was aimed at various forms of human learning--

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[1]Arthur S. Yates, The Doctrine of Assurance (London: The Epworth Press, 1952), p. 211, quoting John Wesley, Sermons--1746 (E. H. Sugden, 1935), I, 30.

[2]Drury (ed.), Disciplines of the United Brethren in Christ, p. 150.

particularly philosophy--for their pretensions to true wisdom.[1] One did not need to rely on "tiefsinnige philosophische Speculationen" in order to be a qualified witness to the truth.[2]

George Miller's influential book, Practical Christianity, insists that the most important aspect of a minister's preparation is that he be spiritually alive. The wisdom he requires for his work must come from God. Miller concedes that "learning is necessary and good in its place, if properly applied," but the wisdom that is essential for the minister "cannot be obtained in the high schools of learning, or found among the dead languages, however useful learning may be in its proper place."[3] His help must come through prayer.

Early leaders held these convictions firmly and consistently. So much so that Joseph Harlacher even had a dream in which he confronted the issue. He recalled meeting another minister, who asked him what he was doing there. He replied:

> . . . . preaching the Gospel. Then he said, that I had not studied and was not learned and was unable to preach, to which I gave answer saying, I have the peace of God in my soul and have experienced the forgiveness of my sins and knowing that is sufficient. As he heard what I said, he began to weep bitterly saying, I cannot say as much. I told him then, you must be converted and cease preaching the untruth to your people or you and they will be lost.[4]

John Walter, the associate of Albright and George Miller, was "so completely uneducated that at first he had to spell the hymns and texts

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[1]See "Philosophers and Philosophy," RT, December 2, 1835, p. 100.

[2]"Kurze Beweiszführung für die Gottheit Christi," CB, II (July, 1837), 49-51.

[3]Miller, Practical Christianity, p. 57. Also see J. Spaulding, "To Young Men Preparing for the Ministry," RT, August 9, 1837, p. 61.

[4]Harlacher, Journal, July 24, 1833, p. 58.

which he desired to read to his congregations."[1] This did not hinder his effectiveness in the pulpit, for he was probably the most powerful of the early Evangelical preachers.[2] Nor did it diminish his hymn-writing ability, for two of his compositions were the most popular German hymns ever written in America.[3] John Seybert, the missionary bishop of the young movement, clearly illustrates the scorn for formal education which was more typical of the Evangelicals than of the United Brethren. He wrote thus of his own preparation and his estimate of the worth of other ministers' preparation for the ministry:

> As I was seven years old my father sent me to school to learn to read and write, and so I attended school each winter until I was able to read the English and German and write. Finally he also sent me for religious instruction to my ungodly University Educated Teacher, which also did not make me any better.[4]
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> . . . . . .
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> Brother Barber preached at night from Acts 3:22, 23, with power and not like the University Educated and pharisaic hypocrites.[5]
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> . . . . . .
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> Here there is little hope for conversions. The people who are Lutheran, Reformed and Catholic are very hard hearted, indifferent and ungodly, and hateful persecutors of the children of God from whom our people for many years have endured much suffering and persecution. One of those godless persons, free and publicly said, if the militia were called out to destroy that praying group, he would assist them, and would be among the first to help. Those are of our present day university educated good logicians, so called good Christians.[6]

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[1] Yeakel, Co-Laborers, p. 134.

[2] Reuben Yeakel in his History, I, 54n., comments that "most likely Walter would not have become such a powerful preacher, if he had first passed through one of the theological schools of that time." See Albright, p. 62. The widespread lack of formal education is probably one reason why most early contributors to the church press did not sign their names. They did not want to flaunt their abilities and training in the face of those who had not had educational advantages.

[3] Yoder, pp. 349, 354-56.

[4] Seybert, Journal, I, 2. See Ibid., II, Part 2, p. 4.

[5] Ibid., I (October 7, 1820), 5.

[6] Ibid., II (January 13, 1824), 46; cf. ibid., I (June 16, 1821), 49.

Even some of those who did not openly oppose a trained ministry were not in favor of long periods of time spent in schools. They feared that "many of the public institutions, affecting to qualify young men for the labors of God's vineyard, are avenues through which fashionable formality is perpetuated, without the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost."[1] William Rhinehart, the first editor of the United Brethren's Telescope (1834-1839), asserted that "three or seven years is too long a period to doom a pious youth to christian theology, to qualify him to tell that 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'"[2] He could not agree with those who sought to "make" ministers by means of education.[3] Rhinehart was no defender of crudity, however, for he later compiled a hymnal designed to promote greater dignity in United Brethren worship.[4]

Fear of education for ministers was not universal, however. A few men recognized the importance of developing the mind and were not afraid to speak out. United Brethren were unable to forget their venerable founder, Otterbein, who had received a good education in his home town of Herborn in Germany. In the academy there he took advantage of educational opportunities

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[1]"Educated Ministers," RT, January 27, 1836, p. 10.

[2]William Rhinehart, "Editorial," RT, February 24, 1836, p. 18.

[3]RT, January 10, 1838, p. 3. William Hanby, Rhinehart's successor, reprinted an open letter to the ministers of all denominations which appeared in the Oberlin Evangelist; in the article Finney in his demonstrative manner writes that he is "alarmed, grieved, and distressed beyond expression, when so much stress is laid upon the necessity of mere human learning and so little upon the necessity of the baptism of the Holy Spirit." RT, June 24, 1840, p. 51.

[4]Yoder, p. 409.

which were close to the level of university training.[1] Surely his example influenced his associate, George Geeting, whose formal education was considerably inferior. Geeting worked assiduously at the task of self-education[2] and also found time not only to start a school for the children of his community in Washington County, Maryland (then Frederick County), but also to teach there.[3] The files of the Telescope also disclose an undercurrent of support for a well-trained ministry. Some were beginning to admit that "the time has passed away when in our country, learning was supposed to be unnecessary in a minister."[4]

The Evangelicals' fear of an educated ministry also began to subside. Although Jacob Albright, the founder of the Evangelical Association, was not a well-educated man, he tried to compensate for his academic deficiencies by avid reading habits.[5] Even Bishop Seybert, despite his grave reservations about formal education for ministers,[6] was hardly a foe of learning. He was a careful student and a voluminous reader, his library being the finest in the denomination at that time.[7] Also, he gave away thousands of books to the poor and sold even more throughout the West. In 1841 he purchased 23,725 books which he took west for distribution on his

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[1]Drury, History, p. 36n. [2]Ibid., p. 109.

[3]John H. Ness, Jr., "The Life of George Adam Geeting" (unpublished B.D. thesis, United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio, 1945), p. 4.

[4]"The Christian Minister"(taken from Christian Herald), RT, July 1, 1835, pp. 54-55. See "Education, A short Dissertation on the Mind, and the importance of the Cultivation of its Faculties," RT, June 14, 1837, pp. 45-46. Also see "Modern Infidelity," RT, May 16, 1838, pp. 38-39, which recognizes learning as the handmaid of religion. One correspondent, in addition to supporting Sabbath and common schools, brazenly advocates the education of ministers (RT, February 21, 1838), p. 15.

[5]W. W. Orwig, History of the Evangelical Association (Cleveland, Ohio: Charles Hammer for the Evangelical Association, 1858), p. 13.

[6]Supra, p. 33. [7]Albright, p. 262.

evangelistic journeys.[1] Seybert's friend and associate, Joseph Long, also had a deep desire for learning. When ill health compelled him to "locate" for eight years, he spent much of his time in reading, particularly the standard theological works of the time.[2]

Sources of Influence

And what were these "standard theological works"--these normative volumes which the young minister would learn to treasure by the example and advice of his veteran associates? A partial answer lies in the recognition that these movements were by no means entirely unique and unprecedented. They had their roots in larger movements which were similar in many ways and from which they derived many of their characteristic emphases. One may very well see them as part of what Ronald Knox has called "enthusiasm" and "ultra-supernaturalism,"[3] for early Evangelicals and United Brethren felt a kinship with many of the figures that fill the pages of Knox's book--Puritans, German Pietists, mystics, and Wesley,[4] and it was their writings that were studied and quoted.

Also, the rise of both denominations was part of the response to the post-Revolutionary religious and moral decline in America that historians call the Second Great Awakening. This spontaneous and unorganized movement was a revival of religious vigor quite diverse in expression, ranging all the way from Timothy Dwight's sedate and intellectual reclamation of Tom Paine's disciples at Yale to the wildly emotional Cane Ridge camp

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[1]Spreng, Seybert, p. 227. [2]Yeakel, Long, p. 194.

[3]R. A. Knox, Enthusiasm, A Chapter in the History of Religion (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1950), pp. 1-2.

[4]Drury, History, pp. 36-48; A. W. Drury, The Life of Rev. Philip William Otterbein (Dayton, Ohio: United Brethren Publishing House, 1890), pp. 27ff.; Albright, pp. 24-34.

meeting on the Kentucky frontier. Inspiration for this movement came from every quarter: the heirs of Puritanism, German Pietism, the burgeoning and virile Methodistic movement, and America's first Great Awakening in the days of Jonathan Edwards.

A century before, in the latter years of the seventeenth-century John Philip Spener initiated a movement to revitalize a German Lutheranism grown somnolent, involuted,--preoccupied with the preservation of orthodoxy. Although the influence and vigor of German Pietism had diminished by the latter half of the eighteenth-century, it was by no means dead. In this kind of atmosphere Philip William Otterbein was reared. Many other German leaders of the Second Great Awakening were nourished by the writings and example of their fellow Germans on the Continent who still maintained the Pietistic concern for vital Christian experience issuing in good works.

Evangelicals and United Brethren deeply inhaled the spirit that permeated German Pietism by means of John Arndt's widely-known and influential book, Wahres Christenthum [True Christianity]. Although he died early in the seventeenth-century, Arndt had exerted a powerful influence on John Philip Spener and the rising pietistic movement later in the century. Otterbein's congregation at Tulpehocken, Pennsylvania, was familiar with the book, for they had been given copies by the court-chaplain of St. James before their departure from London on the way to America.[1] People's veneration for it is evident in these words of commendation from the Religious Telescope:

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[1]Drury, History, p. 71. John Seybert notes in his Journal, XII (February 15, 1842), 37, that a man by the name of Hubler, in whose home he had held services, was converted in 1839 through his reading of Arndt's classic. William Nast, "patriarch of German Methodism" in America, also read Arndt's book (Carl Wittke, William Nast [Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1960], p. 8).

> This inimitable devotional book, which by the blessing of God has probably accomplished as much good as any other work, (except the Bible,) that has ever been printed, was written originally in the German language, in the year 1621. . . . It is said that it has been several times saved in a remarkable manner from raging fires.[1]

Either denomination could well have adopted True Christianity as its official theology, for it contains most of the central emphases of Evangelicals and United Brethren, such as the necessity of conversion and continuing vitality of Christian experience as fostered through the daily practice of devotional exercises. Arndt relies heavily on Scripture, of course, and he stresses works of love as forming an integral part of the life of the converted. Also, an ascetic emphasis is present in his advocacy of a life of strict morality.[2] He is convinced that little contention and strife about church and doctrine would remain, and "heresies would of themselves fall to the ground" if people would but live in Christ and walk in his love and humility, mortifying their flesh.[3] In typical fashion he affirms that

> the knowledge of God . . . does not consist in words, nor in merely speculative and superficial knowledge, but in a vital, lovely, and divine feeling, in a pure and unmixed pleasure, gently infusing itself into the heart, by faith, and penetrating it with an unutterable and heavenly sweetness.[4]

"Experimental knowledge . . . infused into a faithful heart" is vital; it is thus that a "man liveth in God, and God in man; and thus man knoweth God in truth, and is known of God."[5]

The writings of German Pietists, who had felt the influence of Arndt,

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[1]"Arndt's True Christianity," RT, April 6, 1836, p. 32. Arndt's classic was a favorite of pietists in Sweden (George Stephenson, The Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration [Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1932], p. 54).

[2]John Arndt, True Christianity, II, Book II, Part II, 27.

[3]Ibid., I, 262. [4]Ibid., I, 68. [5]Ibid.

also were staple reading.[1] August Francke's Menschen-Furcht [Fear of Men] was published by the Evangelical Association in 1818, the youthful leader, John Dreisbach, having written an introduction to it.[2] Evangelicals knew Johann Rambach (1693-1735), a theologian influenced both by Pietism and Wolffian philosophy, through his Meditations and Contemplations on the Sufferings of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Another favorite was Gottfried Arnold, whose Portraits of the First Christians reflects his hostility to dogma and ecclesiasticism. John Seybert knew the book so well that he had it almost entirely committed to memory.[3]

Another religious tradition was represented by the writings of Richard Baxter and Joseph Alleine, English Puritan leaders of the seventeenth century.[4] Christian Newcomer knew Alleine's Foundation to a True Christianity, which he thought treated "the subject of conversion in a masterly manner."[5] George Miller also was acquainted with Alleine's Foundation, and he quoted its admonition to live piously, avoiding the company of "wicked and vain associates."[6]

These practical-minded evangelistic preachers also felt a kinship

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[1]See James Orville Bemesderfer, "Pietism and its Influence upon the Evangelical United Brethren Church" (unpublished S.T.D. dissertation, School of Theology, Temple University, 1951).

[2]Albright, p. 132. Francke also was known to readers of the Botschafter through his "Kurze Anleitung zum Christenthum" (CB, August 15, 1840), pp. 122-123.

[3]Spreng, Seybert, p. 50.

[4]George Miller, p. 156. Baxter's "Fifty Reasons why a sinner should turn to God without delay" appeared in the Botschafter, IV (March, 1839), 17-19.

[5]Hough, p. 26. Alleine's "Am I Sound in Heart?" appeared in the Telescope, November 14, 1838, p. 92.

[6]Miller, p. 140; also see p. 157.

with mystics of various shades. John Arndt himself reveals a mystical side in his influential book. He acknowledges that à Kempis, Tauler, and St. Bernard are among his favorite authors. Also, the characteristic themes of mysticism are present: illumination, marriage of the believer to Christ, and God's dwelling within the believer.[1] Arndt assures his readers that "love unites the Lover with the Person loved, and transforms into the same Nature."[2]

Another mystic whom Evangelicals knew was Jacob Boehme (1575-1624), the German theosopher who was concerned with the nature of true regeneration and the true Christian life--as well as with his almost opaque philosophy.[3] The medieval mystic, John Tauler, was one of Seybert's favorites.[4] His library likewise contained the works of Gerhard Tersteegen (1697-1769), the German Reformed mystic and hymn-writer who lived his entire life outside the Reformed Church because of his abhorrence of merely formal orthodoxy.[5] W. W. Orwig, early editor of the Evangelicals' Botschafter, also was a Tersteegen fan.[6] Tersteegen's name became more widely known as a result of the publication of à Kempis's Imitation of Christ, one of the favorites of Evangelicals and United Brethren.[7] The Imitation was among the books in

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[1]Arndt, I, 283, 289, 291; II, 31. [2]Arndt, II, 502.

[3]Albright, p. 262. [4]Spreng, Seybert, p. 364.

[5]Albright, p. 262. Otterbein had indirect contact with Tersteegen through a Mr. Stahlschmidt, who had made two visits to Tersteegen before coming to America (Drury, Otterbein, p. 91).

[6]Gerhard Tersteegen's "Kurzer Bericht von der Mystik," CB, December 1, 1840, pp. 178-80, is a commendatory article, showing that mystics do not necessarily profess to have special revelations or possess unusual spirituality. The mysticism of which he writes is distinct from theosophy; it is nothing else than the "practice of divine blessedness" and a "description of the life in Christ." See also CB, November 15, 1841, p. 176.

[7]Probably Tersteegen was the editor, for he wrote the preface to the edition.

Seybert's library;[1] à Kempis was one of his three favorite authors.[2] The publishing house of the Evangelical Association printed a German translation of the Imitation in 1838; the Eastern Conference of the denomination had ordered 1500 copies of it.[3] United Brethren were acquainted with Fénelon, the French Roman Catholic archbishop who championed Mme. Guyon's quietistic and mystical doctrines.[4] In Otterbein's library were several volumes of the Berleburg Bible, an eight-volume edition with abundant notes and illustrations. It was produced in 1726-1742 by sympathizers of the mystical way in Wittgenstein-Berleburg and became very popular with German nonconformists.[5] Caspar Schwenckfeld, the contemporary of Luther and Zwingli who stressed the inner revelation of the Spirit, was another mystic known to readers of the Botschafter,[6] and his works were present in Seybert's library.[7]

Methodists exerted as powerful an influence as anyone. Francis Asbury, the tireless Methodist pioneer bishop, was an intimate friend of Philip Otterbein, and the latter assisted in his consecration to the office of superintendent at the Christmas conference in Baltimore in 1784.[8] A number of times Asbury visited Martin Boehm, Otterbein's associate. When Jacob Albright experienced a religious awakening, he united with the local Methodist class.[9] It is not strange that both groups became known as "Dutch Methodists" or "German Methodists."

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[1]Albright, p. 262. [2]Spreng, Seybert, p. 364. [3]Albright, p. 209.

[4]François Fénelon, "On Self-Renunciation," RT, December 12, 1838, pp. 97-98.

[5]"Sects (Christian)," Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, ed. James Hastings, XI (1921), 324.

[6]"Von der Welt-Liebe," CB, III (February, 1838), 16.

[7]Albright, p. 262. [8]Drury, History, p. 146. [9]Albright, p. 49.

Evangelicals and United Brethren gained considerable knowledge of Methodist publications through the innumerable contacts with Methodist preachers; frequently services were held jointly and a minister of one denomination preached to the congregation of another. Christian Newcomer tells of his recurrent association with Richard Whatcoat, Freeborn Garretson, Lorenzo Dow, Jesse Lee, Francis Asbury, Reed, Jefferson, Henry Boehm, Matthews, Strawbridge, and Bishop McKendree.[1] Wesley's influence no doubt was felt directly through those of his writings which were available at that time.[2] The first Evangelical discipline, published in 1809, included several doctrinal essays taken from the writings of Wesley and Fletcher.[3]

John Fletcher was a native of Switzerland who joined the Methodist movement shortly after he went to England in 1752. Ordained a priest in the Church of England, he became an avid defender of Methodist doctrine. Most of his writings were aimed against Calvinism, but he always treated his foe with fairness and respect.[4] Evangelicals knew his writings well, not only through the printing of the brief selections in the Evangelical

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[1]Hough, pp. 55, 83, 85, 91, 94, 116, 126, 132, 139, 140, 148, 152, 159, 182, 234.

[2]W. W. Orwig notes that Thomas Buck, a prominent preacher of the Association, agreed with Wesley on holiness (History of the Evangelical Association [Cleveland, Ohio: Charles Hammer for the Evangelical Association, 1858], p. 358). Reuben Yeakel mentions that John Dreisbach read Wesley (Jacob Albright and His Co-Laborers [Cleveland, Ohio: Publishing House of the Evangelical Association, 1883], p. 304). A translation of one of Wesley's sermons on Christian perfection, "Ueber die Christliche Vollkommenheit," was printed in the Botschafter, February 15, 1840, pp. 33-35, and later issues carried sermons on family worship and on "Die Rechtfertigung durch den Glauben" (CB, January 1, 1841, pp. 1-2; CB, January 15, 1841, pp. 9-11).

[3]Reuben Yeakel, History of the Evangelical Association (Cleveland, Ohio: Evangelical Publishing House, 1894), I, 101.

[4]"Fletcher, John William," The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, IV (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1909), 331-332.

discipline, but through William Bersch's translation of the Appeal to Matter of Fact and Common Sense, published by the Evangelicals in 1839. This was intended to be an antidote for Pelagian tendencies among some of the preachers of the Association. for in it Fletcher sets out to prove the depravity of human nature.[1]

John Dreisbach was acquainted with Fletcher through his Portrait of St. Paul, a copy of which Francis Asbury had given him.[2] It calls attention to St. Paul's piety shown forth in a great variety of Christian virtues, such as charity to the poor, courage in defense of truth, prudence, tenderness, perfect disinterestedness, patience and fortitude, and the constancy of his zeal and diligence to the end of his life, noting also Paul's intimate union with Christ by faith. Fletcher's Portrait may have an autobiographical flavor, for Wesley called Fletcher the holiest man he had ever met, or ever expected to meet this side of heaven.[3] The third part is an essay on "the connection of doctrines with morality." Fletcher understood doctrines to be intimately connected with morality. They were instructions, precepts; doctrine always had a practical connotation for him.[4] He scorned a merely "speculative faith."[5] Also, he stressed that the effectiveness of the minister depends upon the strength of his faith and his character.[6]

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[1]Albright, p. 209. See CB, June 15, 1840, pp. 92-93. Another article by Fletcher appeared about that time, borrowed from the Christian Apologeten (CB, April 1, 1840, p. 55). See John Fletcher, "A View of the Evidences of Christianity," RT, February 20, 1839, p. 13. Also see RT, August 18, 1841, p. 10.

[2]Yeakel, Co-Laborers, p. 304.

[3]The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, IV, 332.

[4]John Fletcher, "The Portrait of St. Paul," Works (London: T. Cordeux, 1815), VIII, 322.

[5]Ibid., VIII, 360. [6]Ibid., VIII, 363.

Evangelicals and United Brethren shared these beliefs with Fletcher--and perhaps learned them from him.

One of the more popular books was Johann Firth's Des Ehrwürdigen Benjamin Abbott's Erfahrung [The Honorable Benjamin Abbott's Experience]. The publication committee of the Association authorized its translation into German and publication in 1835.[1] Abbott was a Methodist revivalist who preached chiefly along the eastern seaboard during the Revolutionary period and afterwards, and his life story of dramatic conversion and energetic revivalistic endeavors provided many sermon illustrations.[2]

Lorenzo Dow, the Methodist revivalist, was known to Seybert and Newcomer through personal contact. In addition, the Evangelical Association published his Chain of Reason in 1836.[3] It is a little book which defends Methodist doctrine by attacking opposing ideas such as "once in grace, always in grace," the doctrines of Universalism, particular election and reprobation, and the doctrine of the eternal Sonship of Christ.[4]

Another Methodist even more important to Evangelical and United Brethren was Richard Watson, an English Methodist and systematizer of Wesleyan doctrines. A sizable part of his Institutes, like many other theological works of its time, is devoted to the amassing of evidences for the truth of the Christian revelation. The mood of Butler and Paley continued

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[1]Albright, p. 208.

[2]Joseph Harlacher mentions having read "Reverend Abbott's Journal" in 1833 (Journal, October 21, 1833, p. 75), so apparently there were earlier editions in circulation before the publication of the German edition by the Association.

[3]Albright, p. 208. Cf. also CB, IV (January, 1839), 8.

[4]Lorenzo Dow, "A Chain of Reason," The Dealings of God, Man, and the Devil; as Exemplified in the Life, Experience, and Travels of Lorenzo Dow (New York: Lamport, Blakeman and Law, 1853), II, 5, 6, 8, passim.

to prevail throughout much of the nineteenth century, even after the threat of deism was long gone. For a variety of reasons Evangelicals and United Brethren were impervious to the newer Romanticism, with its rejection of the pedantic collecting of evidences.[1] Probably the most important reason is the Romantics' liberalism with regard to the Scriptures. Coleridge seems far closer to the spirit of the emotional and experience-centered Evangelicals and United Brethren, but they seem not to have known him at all in the earlier years of the nineteenth century. In apologetics, the staple theological diet consisted of evidence-centered theological works, of which Watson's was the most popular.[2]

Training By Study Course

During the thirties both denominations moved steadily towards setting up standard study courses for the training of their ministers. Among United Brethren sentiment in favor of such a course began to escalate just prior to the General Conference of 1841. William Hanby was responsible for much of this interest, for soon after he became editor of the Telescope in 1839 he engaged in a program of agitation on behalf of better ministerial training.[3] He encouraged those who supported a ministerial course of study "not to get weary in such a good cause."[4] That his opinions were not universally

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[1]Cf. Samuel T. Coleridge's comment in Aids to Reflection (New York: Tibbals and Son, 1872), p. 317: "Evidences of Christianity! I am weary of the word. Make a man feel the want of it, rouse him, if you can, to the self-knowledge, of his need of it; and you may safely trust it to its own evidence,--remembering only the express declaration of Christ himself: No man cometh to me, unless the Father leadeth him."

[2]Watson's Institutes was the favorite book of the Evangelical leader, Bishop Long (Yeakel, Long, p. 194). Cf. the request of a correspondent to the Telescope (RT, October 19, 1836, p. 87) for the publication of Chalmer's Evidences of the Truth of the Christian Religion.

[3]RT, March 17, 1841, p. 22. [4]Ibid.

accepted is evident in his defense against adverse criticism:

> What we mean by a selection of standard works, is not to make the writings of those great men the standard of our faith--we think that our confession of faith will answer our purpose on that subject--but to make such a selection, the reading of which we will recommend to all of our ministers as sources of instruction.
>
> But some will be ready to say that such a course would be calculated to foster pride and self-importance, and thereby remove from us a sense of our dependence upon the divine Being. To such we would say, that pride, self-importance, or the loss of a sense of our dependence on the great Jehovah, are not the legitimate offspring of education.[1]

Hanby was the most persistent agitator for better ministerial training among United Brethren.

The denomination-wide conference held in 1841 responded to this pressure by appointing a committee of five to select theological books for a standardized course of study. The committee approved this list of books:

> Bible, Kirkham's Grammar and elocution with Hedges Logic. Fletcher's Appeal, Watson's Theological Institutes, and Biblical Dictionary. Horns Introduction to the Study of the Scriptures, Jays works in full, Prideaux connections with Benson's Notes, Josephus, with Mosheim's Church History, Rollens' Ancient History, with Grimshaw's of Rome, and Goldsmith's History of England.--Newton on the Prophecies and Dick's works.--Also Cumstock's Treatise on Phylosophy and Chymistry, Dr. Watts on the Mind, and Harris on covetousness.[2]

Watson was the mainstay of the course, and Fletcher's Appeal, which was entirely devoted to showing man's desperate need of salvation, already was widely read by United Brethren. Thomas H. Horne (1780-1862) was a Biblical scholar who when ten years old received private instruction from Coleridge for one summer, but there is little evidence of Coleridge's influence.[3]

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[1]William Hanby, "Theological Reading," RT, September 4, 1839, p. 71. See William Hanby, "Theological Reading," RT, August 7, 1839, p. 63.

[2]RT, August 18, 1841, p. 10.

[3]Horne was only ten years old at the time, however ("Horne, Thomas Hartwell," The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, V [New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1909], 366. Thomas H. Horne, A Compendious Introduction to the Study of the Bible (New York: Carlton and Porter, n.d.).

Horne devoted about one-fifth of the entire three-volume work to evidences of the genuineness, the authenticity, and the inspiration of Scripture. Mosheim's (1694 or 1695-1755) Ecclesiastical History was the widely-known work of a man who was the most learned scholar in the Lutheran Church of his day. His opposition to the confessional orthodoxy of his day and to deists' over-reliance on reason added to his attractiveness to United Brethren.[1] These works reveal some of the characteristic emphases of the church, but the course of study as a whole is hardly unique enough to mark it off as unmistakably United Brethren.

In 1843 the Evangelical Association took similar action, including some of the same works on its course of study.[2] In addition to Watson, Fletcher, and Mosheim the Evangelicals included David Collier's Einleitung zum richtigen Verstande und nützlicher Lesung der heiligen Schrift [Introduction to a Correct Understanding and Useful Reading of Holy Scripture],[3] Wesley's sermons (for those who could read English), Josephus, Rotteck's world history, a German grammar, the church discipline, Biblical natural history and geography, works on the existence and attributes of God, and the Bible. The Collier book was a fairly simple introduction to the Bible to be used by first-year students. In addition to a brief summary of each book of the Bible, it dealt with Biblical background and the problem of divine inspiration. Its affirmations about the indwelling of the Holy

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[1]"Johann Lorentz von Mosheim," The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, VIII (1910), 28-29.

[2]Albright, p. 213. Despite the fact that this action was taken during the years covered in Part II, it is noted here because it follows so closely the United Brethren action of 1841.

[3]F. C. Rambach translated this English book into German.

Spirit in the life of the Christian were congenial to Evangelical beliefs,[1] and its treatment of prophecies and miracles as evidence of the divine origin of the Bible was typical of other books which they used. From this time onward the Course of Study functioned in both churches as one alternative for theological education. Similar in some ways to the old internship arrangement in the days of Jonathan Edwards, it charged experienced men in each Conference with supervision of the theological training of younger men entering the ministry.

Prior to the establishment of the Evangelicals' course of study George Miller's Thätiges Christenthum [Practical Christianity] had served them since 1814 as a sort of standard theological work by which ministers could check their doctrine. Miller's book proclaimed simply the central message of the church--the necessity of repentance and conversion and the ability of God to lift men above a life of sin.[2] His Life of Albright and his own Autobiography also had provided guidance for young ministers and continued to do so after the adoption of the study course.[3] As one of Albright's more important converts, George Miller was the leader who maintained continuity in the new movement between the premature death of Albright and the time when the youthful John Dreisbach emerged as leader. Miller was accustomed to opposition and harassment, for his mill was boycotted and damaged by men who disliked his religious activities. He died of tuberculosis at

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[1]David Collier, Einleitung zum Richtigen Verstande und Nützlicher Lesung der Heiligen Schrift, trans. F. C. Rambach (Neu-Berlin, Pennsylvania: J. C. Reiszner für die Evangelische Gemeinschaft, 1845), p. 28.

[2]The pervasive concern of the denomination for conversion and salvation also dominates Samuel Miller's (George Miller's son) Das Kern-Wesen von der Erlösung, which was published by the Eastern Conference of the Association in 1836 (Albright, p. 116).

[3]Albright, p. 115.

the age of forty-two after rendering valuable and heroic service as organizer, preacher, and leading writer for the new Evangelical movement. The conversion experiences of Albright and Miller, the depth of their piety, their energetic evangelistic endeavors, and the content of their Christian experience provided models for the young preacher that were far more intimately related to the life of the denomination than the books on the study course and consequently they exercised more influence.[1]

Although the early prejudice against education for ministers had begun to fade by the forties, the fear of over-emphasizing education was still present. It was evident in the warning that concluded the first report of the Evangelicals' committee on ministerial training: "Schliezlich wünschen wir aber doch einen Jeden noch zu erinnern, dasz ohne die Salbung des heiligen Geistes und die göttliche Ausrüstung vom Himmel, alles Studieren und alle Wissenschaften in der ganzen Welt ihn nicht tüchtig machen das Predigt-Amt zu verwalten; weszhalb wir Jedem rathen, vor allem Andern, die unumgänglich nothwendige Gnade, Salbung und Weisheit zu seinem Berufe, von Gott zu erbeten."[2] Other denominations were establishing theological seminaries during this period, but the fear of "preacher factories"--making ministers by the human means of education--prevented Evangelicals and United Brethren from taking similar action until late in the nineteenth century.

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[1]John Hildt's translation and edition of Christian Newcomer's Journal (Hagerstown, Maryland: F. G. W. Kapp, 1834) probably served a similar function for United Brethren.

[2]CB, March 1, 1844, p. 37. "Finally, we surely want to remind everyone again that without the unction of the Holy Spirit and divine equipment from heaven, all the study and science in the whole world does not make a man fit for the ministry; wherefore we counsel every man, before everything else, to pray God for the necessary grace, unction, and wisdom which are indispensable for his calling."

IV. THE NATURE AND FUNCTION OF THEOLOGICAL INQUIRY

Because of the lack of any systematic and official statement dealing with the subject, an estimate of the place of theological inquiry in the early life of the Evangelical Association and the United Brethren Church requires a piecing together of scattered fragments of evidence. These pieces form a picture of two denominations consciously making Christian experience central and going on to describe and prescribe the nature of that experience. Christian experience was understood as beginning with a momentous and instantaneous conversion, the emotional impact of which provided sufficient assurance that one was pleasing to God. The experience which followed this deliverance from a depraved state was a semi-mystical relationship to Jesus cultivated by frequent meditation. Enabled thus to overcome temptation to sin, one's life was expected to issue in a continuous profusion of good works. Good works (with ascetic tendencies creeping in here and there), the plain word of Scripture, and the good gift of common sense liberally distributed to almost all of God's creation were the criteria whereby one could test the genuineness of anyone's Christian experience. All parts of Scripture were generally regarded as of equal value and authority, and no advance was made beyond the current attitude which held that the Bible was a collection of eternal truths, the language of which was equally comprehensible and relevant to peoples of all time. These were the fundamental convictions of both denominations.

It is neither fair nor informative to say that Evangelicals and

United Brethren were anti-theological, if one thinks of the word in the broadest sense. Both ministers and laymen were frequently occupied with theology in their preaching, in their Conference sessions when they examined one another, in their examination of books they desired to print, in their conversations with their neighbors, in the songs they chose to sing, and in their attempts to convert the lost. All of this theological activity, however, was constricted and curtailed in scope. Though seriously engaged in, it was attenuated and abridged, both because of the lack of a theological tradition indigenous to the denominations and also by being geared to the practical task of saving the lost. Conversion of the ungodly was the most pressing need at hand, and there simply was not enough time to engage in the extended consideration of theological questions which did not have some immediate relevance to the task at hand.

Theology for Defense of the Faith

There were times, however, when doctrinal discussion and orthodoxy became matters of more pressing concern. Seybert records his meeting with fellow leaders of the church for the purpose of examining various books scheduled for publication, checking them for grammatical and doctrinal errors.[1] They did not allow heresy to go uncensured. But theology became important only when fundamental convictions of the denominations were threatened. Thus, one reliable guide was that any doctrine which appeared to contradict the emphasis on man's need for salvation and God's ability to

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[1]Seybert, Journal, VIII (October 5, 1834), 38--the Saitenspiel; IX (June 13, 1836), 60--Samuel Miller's Selfrighteousness and Holiness; IX (April 12, 1837), 114--à Kempis's Nachfolge Jesu Christi; X (September 24, 1838), 70--George Miller's Active Christianity; X (December 13-14, 1838), 81--Fletcher's Appeal; and XI (June 22, 1840), 35--forty-two of Wesley's sermons.

work a moral transformation which man could experience and know about was bitterly condemned. Therefore, Universalism,[1] unconditional predestination,[2] and a denial of free will all were denounced and refuted.[3]

Secondly, because of the importance of Scripture, they summarily repudiated doctrines which appeared to conflict with it. Such dogmas as the divinity of Christ were defended avidly and heresies like Mormonism were debunked.[4] Observation of deists and atheists led these early leaders to assume that rejection of "the plan of salvation" and of the letter of Scripture went hand-in-hand with gross moral turpitude. In this connection, Seybert's comment about a new church being built is significant: "This church shall be free and open to all denominations of Christendom, who live, teach, and believe in the doctrine of the Trinity and preach the doctrine of the Atonement."[5] A denial of the atonement, of course, would contradict both the Bible and also the practical activities to save sinners. But a denial of the Trinity was just as detestable, for it involved more than a denial of Scripture. Those who disavowed the Trinity were associated in the popular mind with deists and atheists, and they were stereotyped as morally depraved. Defense of Scripture and the moral issue were closely linked.

A third occasion when orthodoxy became important was when unity of the church was at stake. Because they understood language to be static and constant, Evangelicals and United Brethren felt no need to repeat the

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[1]William Rhinehart, "Universalism Unveiled," RT, September 21, 1836, pp. 78-79; William Rhinehart, "Universalism," RT, December 14, 1836, p. 98; CB, I (May, 1836), 33-34.

[2]CB, I (May, 1836), 34-35. [3]CB, I (June, 1836), 47.

[4]RT, December 30, 1835, p. 1; March 22, 1837, p. 22.

[5]Seybert, Journal, VII (October 29, 1832), 41.

work of theologians who had gone before. Hence, bringing up theological issues only threatened the church with dissension and gave little promise of doing positive good. Members of the denominations were therefore discouraged from raising theological issues, particularly those which gave promise of being controversial. Instead, their leaders urged them to adhere unquestioningly to the Statement of Faith in the discipline in order to assure the peace and unity of the church.

Dating from the General Conference of the United Brethren in 1833 a rule on the books forbade both preachers and laymen to "become the author of a Doctrinal Book, or Pamphlet, in a printed form, without the approbation of the annual conference or of a select committee by them chosen."[1] The Evangelical Association had taken similar action two years earlier.[2] The felt need for censorship grew out of recent experience involving two schismatic movements which developed out of doctrinal differences. The smaller of these was led by George Kimmel, who insisted that the observance of footwashing as a religious ceremony was essential for salvation. After persistent efforts to change his beliefs proved futile, his membership was terminated.[3] The more serious movement was led by John Hamilton, a very talented and popular man who preached in the English language. Opposing sectarianism, Hamilton tried to found a church that would not be just another sect. Although his movement failed when he was deposed from the ministry in 1831, the result was the loss of most of the English

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[1]Drury (ed.), Disciplines of the United Brethren in Christ, p. 159.

[2]Albright, p. 138. The rule was removed in 1871 (Ibid., p. 279). There was a precedent for these actions in John Wesley's rule that none of his preachers publish a book without his sanction; if a book did receive his approval, it had to be published at his press in London (Knox, pp. 448-449).

[3]Albright, p. 221.

preachers to the denomination.[1] Another doctrinal deviation occurred in 1833 when the Rev. James Bruer began to preach that "an entirely sanctified person had nothing further to do in this world, and hence would be called into eternity at the moment he was made entirely holy."[2] Bruer, who had been an admirer of Hamilton, quietly withdrew from the church when the authorities learned of his deviant views. Doctrinal discussion at times such as these was important, but it hardly went beyond a reaffirmation of fundamental convictions.

Few doctrinal questions were open for discussion, and the expression of the slightest divergence from established doctrine was considered dangerous. Doctrinal discussions were viewed as "disturbances."[3] Gradually the idea had come to prevail that the church must avoid serious doctrinal discussions because they could disturb her peace and concord.[4]

The Enemies

In these formative years theological inquiry and study were engaged in primarily to defend the truth of the Christian faith against dangerous adversaries. A foe which received most attention during the 1830's was Universalism. The church press was filled with refutations of the Universalist position.[5] Its affinity with Methodism was what made it a greater

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[1]Albright, pp. 221-22. [2]Ibid., p. 222. [3]Ibid., p. 220.

[4]The Arian controversy in church history is cited as an example in "Der erste Anlasz zu einer Spaltung in der Kirche," CB, February 15, 1840, p. 32.

[5]CB, I (May, 1836), 33-34. "Fourteen Reasons why I cannot be a Universalist," CB, I (December, 1836), 91-92. William Rhinehart, "Universalism Unveiled," RT, September 21, 1836, pp. 78-79. William Rhinehart, "Editorial," RT, November 2, 1836, p. 90. William Rhinehart, "Universalism," RT, December 14, 1836, p. 98. William Rhinehart, "Universalism," RT, December 28, 1836, p. 102. "A Few Thoughts on Universalism," RT, June 13, 1838, p. 45. William Rhinehart, "Universalism Unmasked," RT, February 6, 1839, p. 10. Note was taken of a new group of Universalists who called

menace.[1] John Murray, earliest spokesman for Universalism in America, had served as a preacher in the Wesleyan movement until he was excommunicated from George Whitefield's society for his heretical views around 1770.[2] In a moment of fairness and openness a Universalist, W. Y. Emmet, was given a chance to reply to the charge that Universalism and infidelity were indistinguishable.[3] The Telescope triumphantly published the recantation sermon of the Rev. William Whittaker, who had been a Universalist before he saw the light. He pointed out that Universalism underrated the value of the redemption and the means of grace, removing a check upon sin and fostering a licentious tendency. His repudiation of his old views makes it difficult to believe that he ever was a convinced Universalist:

> It is at variance with the scriptures. It does not teach those to fear, who are without God and without hope in the world. It does not lead men to cry out as they did of old, and as they do now under other preaching, "What shall we do to be saved?" Its tendency is to carelessness and indifference. It teaches men to think lightly of prayer, and of the Missionary enterprise, Christian Societies, and other means of grace. It denies Christ. It denies the fundamental doctrines of the Bible; original sin, total depravity, the Divinity of Christ and the

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themselves Restorationists (RT, February 20, 1839, p. 14). The Restorationist movement, which lasted from 1831 until 1841 as a separate organization, was closer to the concerns of United Brethren than other Universalists. They insisted that repentance has to occur somewhere, either here or in future life. Their ideas were gradually accepted by the larger body of Universalists until in 1878 the old "death and glory" theory--the immediate and miraculous salvation of all at death--was repudiated ("Universalists," The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, XII [1912], 95-97; "Universalism," Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, ed. James Hastings, XII [1922], 529-535).

[1]Richard Eddy, History of Universalism (New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1894), p. 412.

[2]Ibid., p. 389.

[3]RT, July 22, 1840, p. 60. See the reply to Emmet in the next issue (RT, August 5, 1840, p. 62).

> Holy Spirit; the necessity of regeneration and a change of heart, and the final judgment, and the eternity of punishment.[1]

Universalism contradicted many of the fundamental convictions of the Evangelical and United Brethren movements.

Lesser foes were Swedenborgianism, Mormonism, and Campbellism.[2] United Brethren admitted that some of their preachers had "not only embraced, but actually preached the doctrines taught by Emanuel Swedenborg."[3] Four points of Swedenborgianism which were especially offensive were these: 1) the belief that Scripture contained three distinct senses--celestial, spiritual, and natural; 2) the denial of the doctrine of atonement and the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus Christ; 3) the denial of the resurrection of the body; and 4) the limitation of final destruction by fire to the Christian church.[4] Campbellites and Baptists were censured for over-emphasizing the place of baptism as the consummation of conversion. Also, Campbellites failed to appreciate the emotion-charged conversion experiences encouraged and commended by Evangelicals and United Brethren, not to mention their Wesleyan doctrine of Christian perfection.[5]

Calvinism, another foe, was assaulted by a characteristic appeal to common sense:

> In this respect the system is like Mr. Hume's philosophy, that no credit is to be given to the testimony of our senses, and that there is

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[1] RT, September 16, 1840, p. 73. See also the report of the renunciation of Universalism by another Universalist minister, E. N. Harris (Ibid., pp. 73-74). See RT, September 30, 1840, p. 77.

[2] RT, March 22, 1837, p. 22; RT, May 30, 1838, pp. 42-43.

[3] "Emanuel Swedenborg vs. United Brethren in Christ," RT, February 6, 1839, pp. 10-11.

[4] Ibid.

[5] B. B. Tyler, History of the Disciples of Christ (New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1894), pp. 124-125.

> no such thing as spirit or body in the universe. Such notions may be held in theory, and speculation, but the dictates of common sense will cause their votaries to contradict them in practice, and frequently in their public instructions and exhortations. So it is with our opponents, in regard to the doctrines of divinity; they believe every thing is fixed and settled immutably, and yet they exhort their fellow men, caution and warn them of their danger, and condemn their improper conduct, as though they believed in the reality of man's moral agency, as much as any of their Arminian brethren. These circumstances need not be wondered at; they only show our brethren's sense of justice and moral obligation are struggling against the dogmas of the speculative theology.[1]

A list of heresies condemned by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in 1837 elicited among United Brethren an extended discussion of the virtues and vices of Calvinism.[2] Although most correspondents to the church press condemned Calvinistic doctrines of election and reprobation, there clearly was not unanimity on the subject. United Brethren could not entirely suppress their indebtedness to the Reformed tradition.[3]

The antagonist receiving the most attention, however, is the one variously denominated as deism, atheism, and rationalism. Probably this was no straw man, for many witnesses vouched for its threatening nature

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[1] "Calvinism and Arminianism," RT, June 1, 1836, p. 45.

[2] The Old School and New School factions of Presbyterians separated in 1837, forming separate denominations. This separation was the occasion for the list of heresies. See "Election and Reprobation," RT, June 28, 1837, pp. 50-51.

[3] See John Buchanan's "Defence of Calvinism," RT, November 15, 1837, p. 92; the correspondence in RT, December 13, 1837, p. 99; two more letters (RT, December 27, 1837, pp. 101-102); a letter in RT, January 24, 1838, p. 5; a defense of Calvinism in RT, March 21, 1838, p. 23; Originaliad's denunciation of Buchanan (who had previously written in favor of Calvinism) on grounds of what this doctrine does to "poor defenceless infants and their grief-stricken parents," Originaliad calling the reprobation of infants an "ungodly notion," RT, April 18, 1838, pp. 29-30; and further correspondence on limited atonement, including a reply by a Calvinist, RT, May 2, 1838, p. 34. See also an article borrowed from the Pioneer, which warned against the twin dangers of antinomianism and Arminianism, pointing out that the Wesleys and Fletcher moved too far in the direction of the latter in reacting against the former; the reader is advised to learn "from these lessons of the past, . . . take warning, and aim to follow the medium line of scripture truth" (RT, May 4, 1836, pp. 37-38).

throughout most of this early period of both churches.[1] George Miller, compiler of the Evangelical discipline, testifies to his early (prior to 1800) temptation to become a deist:

> Through my business I became acquainted with many rich and high standing people, who didn't spare any pains to teach me the customs and practices of the higher-class of this world; and if I wouldn't have left their company I would have soon become a free-thinker, for their association gave me more satisfaction and edification than all the fallen church-practices in Christianity, and it is no wonder that some fall into a deism and atheism and have no place for the Christian religion. . . .
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> . . . I fell on my knees with the Bible once and cried out: "Oh God, don't let me become a deist! Oh take those shameful thoughts from me, then I will convert myself!"[2]

John Lawrence, United Brethren historian, tells of a minister in the West, Nathaniel Havens, who was a "devoted disciple" of Tom Paine in early life. Lawrence, who had a flair for the sensational anecdote, recounts the story of Havens' remarkable conversion a moment before he fell into a stream, thus being converted and immersed almost at the same time.[3] John Seybert encountered "rationalism" when he visited New York City in 1839 and recorded his reaction to it:

> I travelled by steamboat and railway to the popular great wicked city of New York, where we located a mission among the German people being served by Jacob Borchert. I found the Germans spoiled beyond measure, adherents of the Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed Churches, the majority of whom are inclined to rationalism, holding that the Patriarchs and Prophets as well as Jesus Christ were all treacherous false leaders, and as the Bible does not appeal to them they cast it forth. And, more yet, they are thoroughly cursers, swearers and drunkards, and so forth.[4]

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[1]See Yeakel, History, I, 27, 28; Eller, "Revivalism . . .," p. 208. According to Evangelicals and United Brethren, even the Disciples of Christ dangerously embraced "rationalism."

[2]George Miller, Life Experiences and Labors of Two Evangelical Preachers, Jacob Albright and George Miller, trans. Samuel E. Graf and Edward T. Ehresman (New Berlin, Pennsylvania: G. Miller for the Evangelical Association, 1834), pp. 37, 38.

[3]Lawrence, II, 122. [4]Seybert, Journal, XI (May 6, 1839), 3.

He also confronted it in Allentown, Pennsylvania, which he visited later in the same month.[1] Rationalism was an ever-present threat.

Defenders of the faith employed a variety of techniques against this hydra-headed monster. One approach was derision, as illustrated by an atheist's prayer, which purports to contain the beliefs of an atheist in Licking County, Ohio:

> I believe that matter is eternal. I know not whether I am a man or an ass. There is no God. There was a time when this world was not; but by chance it created itself. The Bible is priestcraft, and therefore untrue.[2]

Pity for atheists was another tactic. The graphic description of the deathbeds of atheists was another.[3] As with the attack on Universalism, the assailants of rationalism widely publicized conversions from the foe.[4] One favorite tract for the times was Franklin's reply to Tom Paine and his Age of Reason.[5]

The ablest effort in the defense against atheism or rationalism was an unusually thoughtful series of articles in the Botschafter. The author, Jacob Vogelbach, demonstrates considerable training and sensitivity to the

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[1] Ibid., XI (May 26, 1839), 5.

[2] "The Atheist's Prayer," RT, February 22, 1837, p. 15. Cf. RT March 23, 1836, p. 25.

[3] A commentary on the omnipresence of ominous threats to life is Harlacher's description of people's expression of fear at falling stars (Journal, Monday, November 11, 1833, p. 80).

[4] RT, July 26, 1837, p. 57.

[5] RT, December 14, 1836, p. 99. Franklin had argued that religion was needed to serve as a buttress to morality. James Ward Smith contends that to label Paine an "atheist" is "irresponsible slander" since "he proclaimed his belief in one God in no uncertain terms, and deplored the atheistic tendencies of the French revolution" ("Religion and Science in American Philosophy," The Shaping of American Religion, eds. James Ward Smith and A. Leland Jamison [Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961], I, 405).

issue. For instance, he is careful to recognize differences among the various adherents of rationalism instead of lumping them all together. The implications of rationalism for doctrines of revelation, the fall of man, the person and work of Christ, and miracles he capably pointed out.[1] His departure soon afterwards to the Reformed Church was a serious blow to the leadership of the young denomination.[2] Vogelbach recognized a threat in "godless teachers in high schools" and in the "hireling" preachers who "misrepresent the truth for gain, believing only half of what they say."[3] He pointed out how much misery this doctrine had already caused in England and France, enumerating the "atrocities" done in the name of reason, and advised his readers to go to the seaports, especially New York, if they wanted to witness the fruits of rationalism in this country.[4] Rationalism was a foe to be feared and fought.

Defense against the church's enemies--this was the primary function

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[1]For example, Vogelbach writes: "The first teaching is that man needs to believe only that which he can grasp and understand with the reason. Because the Bible or God's Word contains much that is beyond man's reason, and the speculative spirit of man cannot penetrate the secret counsel of God and his wonderful arrangements, they therefore reach the conclusion that one does not need to believe it. They go further and seek to debase the Bible through pretexts not pleasing to God, curtly presenting it as a book of human invention. . . . The doctrine of the fall of man and his redemption through Christ is an additional thorn in the side of the rationalist. In regard to this, the rationalist idealizes a god to suit him which is different than the God of the Bible with the help of old heathen writers such as Plato, and the rationalist alters creation to suit his supposed reason. Their God is a being which is distant, and creation is a work which is finished and now He pays no more attention to it. Man is a sinless creation; all which man did before the awakening of reason is not sinful, for the soul did not know anything about it. God has placed in every man an arrangement whereby he remains very good and perfect. With the awakening of his reason begins his spiritual rise. Reason is the Holy Spirit." (Vogelbach, CB, IV, 50-51). Cf. "Infidel Objections," RT, January 23, 1839, pp. 5-6; E. G. Holdand, "On Atheism," RT, May 1, 1839, p. 35; "Ursachen des Unglaubens," CB, January 1, 1841, p. 3.

[2]Supra, p. 11. [3]Vogelbach, CB, IV, 50-51.

[4]Ibid., IV (September, 1839), 65-66.

of the most serious theological activity or inquiry. In his first editorial in the Botschafter, William Orwig declared that he was going "to affirm boldly and defend the great affirmations of the Christian faith: the doctrine of the Fall, human depravity, redemption available to all through Christ the expiator, justification by faith, the doctrine of the witness of the spirit, of growth in grace, and full salvation."[1] Clearly the most important doctrines to be defended and affirmed are those which relate to man's desperate need, God's salvation of man, and the ability of man to know that he has been converted. Orwig implied that Evangelicals need not discuss these crucial matters unless their defense appears to be an integral part of an overall attack on atheists or rationalists.

Even when preachers became involved in debate with their opponents, their contentions were related to the practical matter of converting the ungodly. Of John McNemar, an effective United Brethren preacher in southwest Ohio, 1814-1834, John Lawrence tells us that he devoted considerable attention to defence of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity in opposition to "New-Lightism" (probably the rising Disciples of Christ movement), then at its greatest strength in southern Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky. After noting that he preached many sermons on the divinity of Christ, Lawrence adds a revealing and characteristic assurance:

> It must not be inferred, however, that he was a religious pugilist, devoting his whole time in the pulpit to theological disquisitions, and finding his reward in the defeat of his antagonist, or in the applause of his friends. Far from it. He was not a vain theologian. His object was to save men; and he had the happy faculty of following up a clear exposition and masterly defense of some great truth with a heart-searching application.[2]

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[1] A. J. Mattill, Jr., "We Glorify God in Him" (typed manuscript in College-Seminary Library, Naperville, Illinois, 1952), chap. ii, p. 8, quoting CB, II (April, 1837), p. 29.

[2] Lawrence, II, 119.

Both of these denominations were dedicated and committed to the conversion and moral renovation of the ungodly, and these changes were expected to come through a heart-rending experience of repentance and assurance at a mourners' bench. Both institutions arose in order to foster this kind of religious experience and regarded themselves as the guardians of it. Any attack on the institution was an attack on the need for this kind of religious response, and any attack on the latter was taken as a threat to the institutions. Hence, theological threats to their fundamental convictions, coupled with lack of institutional security, led Evangelicals and United Brethren to assume almost universally an attitude of defensiveness in theological matters.[1]

Attitudes Towards Theology

The conception of the nature of theology held by the early leaders of these churches is made very clear by the actions taken by the General Conference of the Evangelical Association in 1839 and by the General Conference of the United Brethren in 1841. Both of these bodies took action making unalterable their respective statements of faith.[2] Although Reuben Yeakel wrote about this action more than fifty years later, his comment justifying the action of the Evangelical Association probably contains the sentiment of those who participated in the conference and signed the minutes to indicate their unanimous approval of the proceedings.

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[1]The interest of the Evangelicals in publishing a catechism reveals a somewhat less defensive attitude, for it seems to be an effort simply to instruct the children in order that they might become well-acquainted with the Bible. See Miller, Practical Christianity, p. 110; Albright, p. 216.

[2]Drury (ed.), Disciplines, p. 206; Albright, p. 179. Methodists (1808) and Augustana Lutherans (1860) placed similar restrictions on their doctrinal statements.

> The Articles of Faith contain all the unchangeable foundational doctrines of Holy Scripture, consequently it is perfectly and logically just that they should be constitutionally unchangeable among us. If an edifice is to stand, then, above all things, its foundation must be immovable. If it were allowed to move its basal stones to and fro, how soon it would tumble down!--If in a Church the cardinal doctrines are left subject to change then how soon will various "winds of doctrine" arise to toss the people to and fro and cause confusion. Against such possibilities of evil, safe provisions have thus been made.[1]

Raymond Albright describes this action as "momentous" in his History,[2] but apparently it was not so regarded by John Seybert, who, although he does report that the conference took action against alcoholic beverages and against slavery, makes no mention of the fixing of the Articles of Faith.[3]

These actions of General Conferences relating to the Articles of Faith, together with the action of both denominations in forbidding ministers to publish doctrinal books without permission, demonstrate that they regarded Christian doctrine as a clear, distinct, comprehensible, and indisputable set of propositions about which little discussion was needed. Since doctrinal truth is complete, certain, and immutable, the task of theology is simply to expound obvious truth, defending one's articles of faith by reference to the authority of the Bible, experience, and common sense. This is why both groups could be relatively indifferent to creedal statements in their early years. At first both felt that the Bible was sufficient. When they came to regard such statements as necessary, neither denomination placed a premium upon precision or originality. The United Brethren got up a simple statement of five articles, and the Evangelicals borrowed from the Methodists. Neither one is a unique document which comes welling up out of the vitality of the churches' experiences; they are not

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[1]Yeakel, History, I, 292.

[2]Albright, p. 179.

[3]Seybert, Journal, X (March 29, 1839), 94.

living testimonies which spring forth irrepressibly. Apparently, church leaders devised them primarily to give cohesion and unity to the denomination. Early Evangelicals and United Brethren made no attempt to speak uniquely to the problems of their generation through the articles of faith. They conceived of their task only in terms of repetition of eternal truths in traditional language. No wonder they thought theology should not occupy an excessive amount of time. Actually, in their preaching and in their conversation with their neighbors they did what they failed to do in their more formal theological pronouncements, i.e., point out the relevance of the Gospel for contemporary life. There seemed ever to be a hiatus between the language of formal theological statements and that employed in the informal life of the church. One was to remain relatively static, whereas the latter could be more dynamic in its attempt to speak to men's present condition. Because of this dualism theological inquiry did not occupy an important place on the growing edge of the church.

What Evangelicals and United Brethren believed about theological language and the task of theo-logical activity in the life of the church may be summarized as follows: 1) Affirmations about God and man's relations to Him are eternally true propositions which do not require revision in every generation. 2) Theological inquiry therefore is not a particularly significant and creative activity. The essentials of the simple gospel require few words to set them forth clearly and exhaustively. 3) Christians should not waste their time with such theoretical matters; they are better occupied in efforts to convert the lost since the intellectual aspects of the Christian faith are well fixed and require little attention.[1]

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[1]In an early and fragmentary biographical statement, note is taken of the fact that "Mr. Otterbein, with all his erudition and piety, could not be prevailed on to publish a work on theology, under the full persuasion,

4) The Christian may have an unshakable confidence about the absolute truth of the Christian faith and the possibility of making this perfectly clear to one and all. This was nourished by the assurance that nature was on man's side, which was a part of the evidence-centered theology of the eighteenth century to which Evangelicals and United Brethren were devoted.[1]

5) Parallel to this was the conviction that the Christian Gospel was a simple message. If this were true, it followed that theological inquiry about it must be simple, too.

Neither church was exactly anti-theological, but each was constricted in several ways by its commitments. First of all, because of the centrality of the conversion experience, theology came to have conversion as its chief object. Those theological topics were valuable to discuss which had to do with the instantaneous conversion of sinners. This did limit the task of theology, and the conviction that an emotional experience could provide adequate assurance diminished the prestige of any activity which smacked of being intellectual. If Christian experience had been taken in the very broadest sense (as it occurs in the life of the Church), perhaps few would quarrel with its being the basis for theology. However, there

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no doubt, that a strictly religious example, conducted with a suitable zeal for the advancement of christianity, would be attended with more lasting good, than all the ideas he could advance through the medium of the press. He, therefore, left nothing behind him, but about a quire of paper, filled up in the Latin language, which was of no importance" (RT, June 26, 1839, p. 51).

[1]One aspect of this attention to the evidences of Christianity is the easy acceptance of the goodness of the natural world. In this pre-Darwinian period these simple, agricultural people who lived close to nature had little difficulty believing that nature was a certain proof of God's existence and his benevolence to man. Of Albright it is recorded that he often observed his regular devotional habits out-of-doors (Albright, p. 91). John Seybert, who was almost constantly outdoors because of his incessant travels, could be rhapsodic about God's natural revelation to man (Seybert, Journal, I May 1, 1822 , 103-104). Cf. RT, August 23, 1837, p. 65.

was a danger in limiting Christian experience to the conversion experience of individual Christians, for often these men assumed that this provided a sufficient tool for thorough understanding of the Christian message. More and more, too, the experience of the preacher formed much of the content of his message, thus overstressing the empirical nature of evangelical reality.[1]

The threefold test of the validity of Christian experience--Scripture, reason (of the common sense variety), and good works--surely was potentially fertile ground for serious theological inquiry. For Evangelicals and United Brethren, however, use of Scripture was not very intellectually demanding. Rather, they used the Bible devotionally--as a source of emotional stimulation for their religious sensitivities. When it was used for theological construction, the method they usually employed was a "proof-texting" approach. Also, the kind of reason that both denominations esteemed was the "garden" or "horse sense" variety, which the common man supposedly had in abundance. The third test was that of good works. As of Christian experience, so the study of Christian ethics can be a rigorous theological enterprise. In most cases, however, the consideration of good works was merely an uncritical acceptance of the avoidance of recreation, the theater, plays, the dance, card playing, smoking, jesting, and drinking as evidence that one was truly a Christian. Rigid standards such as these

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[1]Leland Scott ("Methodist Theology," pp. xvii, 21) feels that the preoccupation of American Methodists with evangelical experience had the effect of minimizing and sometimes obliterating any concern for serious theological study. He is convinced that their allegiance to the characteristic Wesleyan emphasis on experience had at least these three significant effects: First, it resulted in an "amazing continuity" of the Wesleyan interpretation of Scriptural experience, the three conditions of which were conviction, conversion, and entire sanctification; second, it tended to exaggerate subjective norms and overstressed the empirical nature of evangelical reality; and third, it tended to confirm an uncritical theological attitude in early American Methodism, which acted as a restrictive and conservative factor.

were hardly the result of any prolonged and rigorous theological study. A very concrete legalism was simply assumed.

Furthermore, the emphasis on the simplicity of the Gospel was not compatible with any concern to take seriously and wrestle repeatedly with the entire intellectual heritage of the Christian Church. The simplification of Christian doctrine, combined with the assumption that theological statements are eternally true propositions, affected ideas about ministerial training and made it seem unnecessary to attempt the restatement of Christian truth in contemporary language, at least in formal theological statements. The result was to cut both the historical and the contemporary dimensions of the theological enterprise.

The pattern of engaging in theological study and activity only when it was necessary in order to defend the faith against attack may have been institutionally necessary, but it precluded the possibility of utilizing theological inquiry to examine critically the basic premises on which the denominations were founded. The churches' commitment to "instantaneous conversionism," for instance, was not within the scope of critical examination; it was simply to be affirmed and defended.

This certainty about basic convictions was both a strength and weakness of both denominations. Their confident commitment envigorated them for the evangelistic task which lay before them, freeing them from the inhibitions of uncertainty. However, to their successors they left a set of working ideas which needed re-evaluation as they in turn faced a new historical situation. Among these precedents that too easily were followed uncritically were the negative attitude toward formal education; the willingness to borrow from outside sources for theological statements; the elevation of individual and subjective norms above the corporate witness of

the church, past and present; and the preference for the emotional appeal, the devotional life, and the comfortable feeling of assurance over disciplined and hard-headed theological study. The static concept of language and the lack of a continuing tradition of theological study resulted in little openness to new ideas, particularly with regard to the central and unimpeachable verities of Scripture (understood literally and uncritically), Christian experience as normative, the value of good works, the ability of man to achieve holiness, and the adequacy of "common sense," with its naive kind of realistic epistemology. Since theology was a matter of stating eternal principles in timeless language, these matters were not open for serious and deep-going discussion. They were simply to be affirmed and defended. To be sure, there was a certain strength in this simplism. However, in all of the more formal theological endeavor the contemporaneous dimension of Christian theological inquiry was largely ignored.

PART II

FROM 1841 TO 1890

V. THE GROWTH OF THEOLOGICAL AWARENESS

Historical Introduction

During these middle years of both denominations immense changes were occurring that transformed their appearance. From diminutive sect groups both were changing into flourishing denominations. United Brethren grew from about 25,000 in 1840 to nearly 200,000 by 1890, while Evangelicals were increasing from about 12,000 to 150,000.[1] This steady growth was the result of an effective ministry to two significant migratory movements of people during this period: European immigration and the westward movement across America. The Evangelicals, clinging to the use of the German language, were better equipped to appeal to first-generation immigrants from Germany. United Brethren made the transition to English far more quickly; hence, they were able to minister more effectively to English-speaking immigrants, to second and third-generation German people, and to others migrating westward.

In 1840 both churches were concentrated in Ohio and Pennsylvania, with minor representation in New York, Maryland and Virginia. United Brethren had already organized a conference in Indiana, and had begun work in Illinois, Wisconsin and Iowa. The succeeding years saw both churches enlarge their work in these states and push speedily into Ontario, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Missouri, Kansas and on to the Pacific coast. This rapid expansion was the product of the dogged efforts of the army of pioneer

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[1]The Evangelical Association had 1227 itinerant ministers in 1891 (Albright, p. 305).

preachers that stretched out across the northern half of the nation--the counterparts of the Methodist circuit-rider and the Baptist farmer-preacher.

Missionary efforts abroad and Christian education at home challenged the abilities and energies of Evangelicals and United Brethren during these years. By the fifties the Evangelicals had begun work in Germany and the United Brethren in Sierra Leone, West Africa. Before 1890 Evangelicals were at work in Japan, and the United Brethren had started a mission in China. Sunday schools, which had been begun here and there prior to 1841, multiplied rapidly. United Brethren linked the Sunday School work with the Home, Frontier and Foreign Missionary Society, thereby tying it to the westward expansion of the church.[1] In the eighties the first youth societies were begun, thus making possible the organization of denomination-wide youth movements in 1890 and 1891. This, too, was the era when denominational colleges began to spring up. Otterbein was the first in 1847 and was followed by such other United Brethren institutions as Lebanon Valley College, Shenandoah Collegiate Institute, and many that did not survive.[2] The forebears of the Evangelicals' Albright College came into being during this period, and North-Western College (now North Central College) was founded in 1861. Each denomination also established a theological school in the seventies. Of course, these efforts were minute in comparison to those of the Presbyterians, who had established forty-nine colleges and universities by 1861, but this lively interest in higher education does represent a big shift in sentiment from that of the earlier years.

A rise in theological interest is evident in several widespread discussions of Christian doctrine which animated the life of both churches.

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[1] Eller, These Evangelical United Brethren, p. 93.

[2] Drury, History, pp. 626-630, 635-643.

In the forties and fifties United Brethren debated belief in the depravity of human nature, finally settling the issue amicably in 1857. The difference of conviction over the matter of secret societies was not settled as happily, however, for in 1889 about 15,000 people left the church to organize a separate denomination which would support a strong rule against membership in secret societies. Evangelicals were agitated through much of this period over the doctrine of holiness. Two editors of the Evangelical Messenger lost their jobs over the issue, and Solomon Neitz, the popular presiding elder from Pennsylvania, was accused of heresy twice in General Conference sessions. After T. G. Clewell was discharged as editor of the Messenger in 1870 the issue subsided, for there were no prominent leaders to oppose the Wesleyan view.

The periodicals continue to lie at the center of the life of the denominations. Four editors of the Religious Telescope went from their work to the United Brethren bishopric: William Hanby, David Edwards, Milton Wright, and J. W. Hott. The other two editors, John Lawrence (1852-1864) and Daniel Berger (1864-1869), wrote histories of the denomination. In 1848 the Evangelical Messenger was launched, the English counterpart of Der Christliche Botschafter founded in 1836. The men who edited these two papers were strategically located to influence the life and thought of Evangelicals. W. W. Orwig, the staunch defender and expositor of holiness doctrine, was editor of the Botschafter for seventeen years (three different terms) and served three terms as publisher.[1] Other editors also were leaders of the church, Rudolph Dubs, William Horn, Reuben Yeakel, and S. P. Spreng becoming bishops. Some, however, ran into difficulties of one kind

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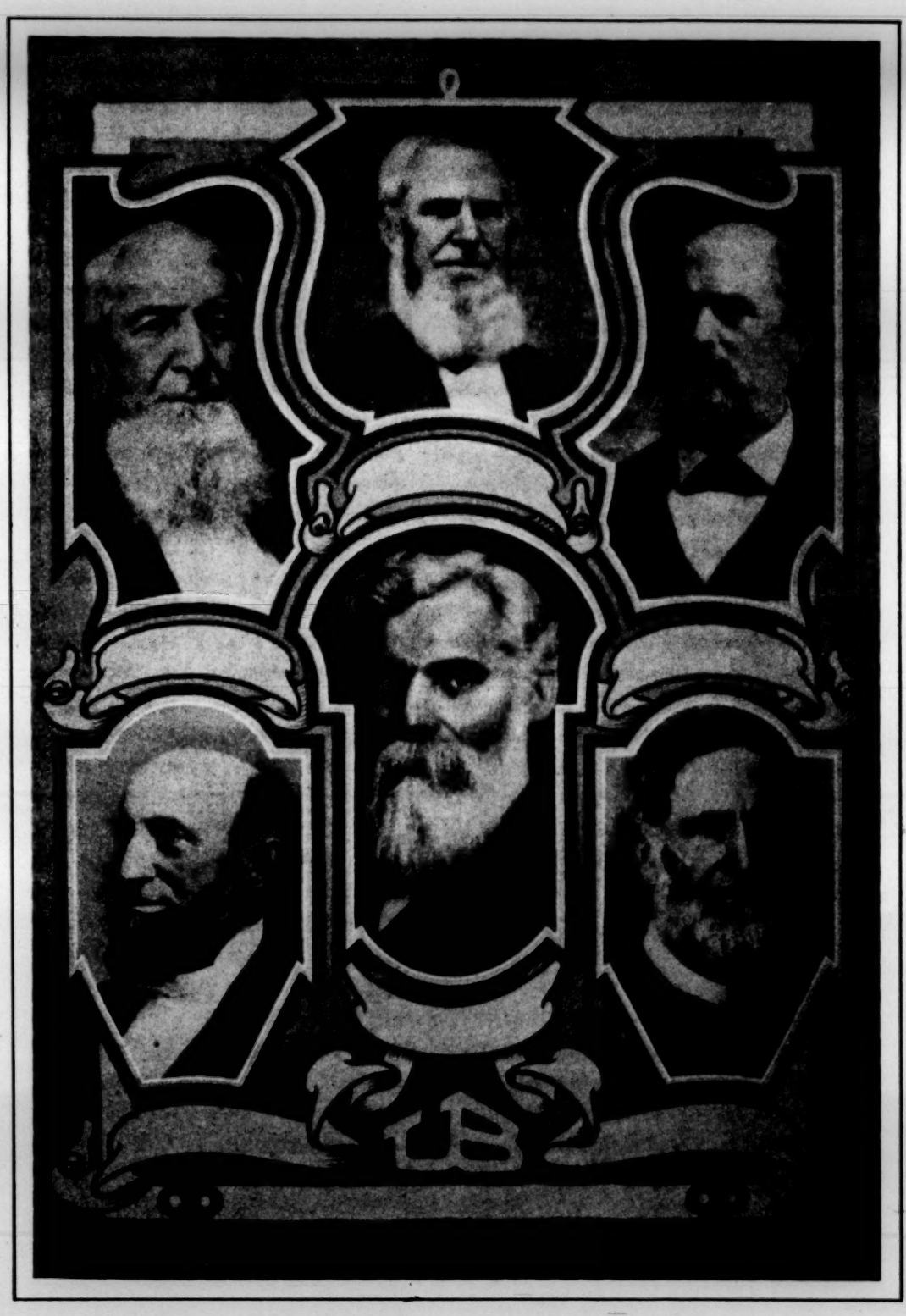
[1]Orwig was the one who accused Neitz of heresy at two General Conference sessions.



EDITORS OF THE RELIGIOUS TELESCOPE

BISHOP WILLIAM HANBY, BISHOP DAVID EDWARDS, JOHN LAWRENCE,
DANIEL BERGER, BISHOP J. W. HOTT, BISHOP MILTON WRIGHT

(A. W. Drury, HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF THE UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST – Courtesy of The Otterbein Press)

or another. Adam Ettinger of the Botschafter was removed from office for "living in discord" with the publisher.[1] Nicholas Gehr (1848-1850), first editor of the Messenger, withdrew from the denomination when he was about to be charged with heresy on the doctrine of holiness, and T. G. Clewell was removed from office for similar doctrinal deviation.[2] H. B. Hartzler (1879-1887) lost his job in the unrest associated with the division of the Evangelicals into two groups in the late eighties and nineties. Evidently the office of editor was highly regarded, for the conduct of its occupants was watched more carefully than that of bishops. Both denominations recognized the great influence which the editors of the journals were able to wield.

The slavery controversy which tragically divided the nation in mid-century could not help but leave its mark on these denominations. Because both were almost entirely Northern churches there was little internal strife, although attitudes towards abolitionism varied considerably.[3] As the national rift erupted into armed conflict, there was strong support for Lincoln and the war effort. John Lawrence filled the Telescope with war news and in 1864 he left his editorial chair to become a chaplain for a Union regiment. The epochal struggle left its mark upon theology in two distinct ways. The polarization of Southern and Northern sentiment towards slavery contributed to the tendency among Evangelicals and United Brethren to approach theological issues in black-and-white terms, a disposition duplicated in other Protestant denominations, both North and South. This merely strengthened a proclivity prevalent in these two churches since their origin. Likewise, they were not immune to the victory mentality of

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[1]Albright, p. 186. [2]Ibid., pp. 272-273.

[3]Eller, These Evangelical United Brethren, p. 72.

the North after 1865 which aided and abetted the self-confidence of all Northern churchmen. Theological discussion as well as their whole approach to church expansion and missionary activities manifested this self-assurance. The successful settlement of the slavery issue and of the military conflict became one more episode in the success story of Evangelicals and United Brethren.[1]

Continuity with the Past

The form of theological activity among Evangelicals and United Brethren was similar to that which prevailed throughout American Christianity during the first three quarters of the nineteenth century--it was diffuse, unsystematic, and often unexplicated. Richard Wolf has suggested, however, that the impact of this "practical and empirical theology based on spiritual experience" may have been far-reaching in scope:

> It is . . . possible to suggest that out of this empirical theology have arisen the definitive attributes of American Christianity, our warmhearted activism, our tremendous benevolent interest and enterprise, our far-reaching missions endeavors, our effective voluntarism, and our comparatively evident sense of spiritual and ecclesiastical responsibility on the part of the layman. It seems certain that no one can understand the American Protestant mind who is unaware of this ever-present practical theology which took its rise in the middle period.[2]

This pattern of informal and occasional theological expression which was dominant among Evangelicals and United Brethren in the early period continued to be a major form of theological activity.

Christian experience in general and conversion in particular continued to occupy the center of the stage, as it did with Methodism.[3] United

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[1]Cf. Sidney Mead's treatment of the same point in The Lively Experiment (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), pp. 143-144.

[2]Richard C. Wolf, "The Middle Period, 1800-1870, The Matrix of Modern American Christianity," Religion in Life, XXII (Winter, 1952-53), 83.

[3]Scott, p. 517.

Brethren cherished their memory of Otterbein's willingness to express his emotions, which was a vivid contrast to the hardness of heart which did not permit his ministerial counterparts in Germany "to drop a tear officially, the Gospel being to them a tearless theme to this day."[1] Although the debate over the place and degree of emotionalism in expressing one's religious sentiments continued,[2] Evangelicals and United Brethren both agreed with the affirmation of the United Brethren bishops in 1889 that "clearness of experience," together with "soundness of doctrine," was the priceless heritage of the church.[3]

Anton Huelster, the first man among the Evangelicals to acquire a Ph.D., gave voice to the convictions of his fellow churchmen that Christian experience must be kept central. Despite his training at Leipzig, Bonn, Berlin, and Tübingen, Huelster was no liberal. Therefore, he was accepted as teacher of Greek and theological studies at the Evangelicals' college at Naperville, Illinois, for six years. After teaching at the new denominational seminary little more than a year, Huelster spent his remaining years in the church in the pastorate. Saddened and discouraged by the dissension which led to schism in 1891,[4] he transferred to the fellowship of the German Congregationalists, serving as editor of their church paper for twenty years. During the seventies and eighties he was the ablest and most

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[1]Henry G. Spayth, United Brethren in Christ (Circleville, Ohio: Conference Office of the United Brethren in Christ, 1851), p. 20.

[2]See RT, December 24, 1851, pp. 66-67; RT, January 21, 1852, p. 81.

[3]Lewis F. John, The Life of Ezekiel Boring Kephart (Dayton, Ohio: United Brethren Publishing House, 1907), p. 186.

[4]According to Huelster's daughter, Virginia H. Chandler, although he and his brother William had many friends in the minority group that became the United Evangelical Church, both departed, William joining the English Congregationalists (Virginia H. Chandler, Letter to William Naumann, July 30, 1963).

prolific writer in the church periodicals, being runner-up in the balloting for editor on one occasion. The church published Die Seelenlehre in 1876, and three years later adopted his catechism for use. Throughout his articles and three published volumes the theme of Christian experience continually reappears. In Die Seelenlehre, which was included in the German Course of Study of the United Brethren in 1885, Huelster states clearly his dependence in large part upon an inductive method, in which experience plays a large part in providing correct understanding of principles of psychology. In fact, he contends that the most important source of insight for psychology is self-observation. "We can learn from the observation of others and from books, but this provides no certainty unless it be confirmed within."[1]

As in the early years of the church, considerable attention remained fixed on the observable results of Christian experience. A better moral life was the expected outcome of Christian experience. Although some were dubious about religious excitement and its abuses,[2] most men agreed that free expression of religious emotions had practical results which justified it. Isaiah Potter examined the balance-sheet in 1855:

> When I philosophize or reason merely on a religious excitement, I become quite sceptical. Those cries, and shouts, and screams--that singing and praising, all in promiscuous confusion, seem absurd. But when we enter upon the realities of a religious excitement it has the

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[1]Anton Hülster, Die Seelenlehre (Cleveland, Ohio: Verlag von der Evangelischen Gemeinschaft, 1875), p. 8. Similar convictions were expressed by the Rev. B. F. Booth, a leading United Brethren minister and presiding elder of the eighties:

> "The personal experience of believers evincing the truth of Christianity can never be disproved, it is absolutely impossible to disprove it. Science may meet science and logic may meet logic, but the love of God in the heart can not be met and overthrown by either or both combined.
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> It would be well if all ministers, and especially professors in theological seminaries, would give greater attention and prominence to this evidence of Divine truth ("Christian Evidences," RT, July 7, 1880, p.1).

[2]See RT, December 24, 1851, pp. 66-67.

following to recommend it: . . . Its participators generally are better men than others. . . . It liberalizes the heart, unties our purse strings, and bestows of our abundance upon good and benevolent objects. . . . Now speculate as we please, that which does all this for man must be genuine.[1]

The moral life remained an important concern throughout the life of the church and functioned as a checkpoint in theological discussion. It becomes a factor in the consideration of "liberalism" later on in the century. United Brethren avidly read a reprint of Joseph Cook's Boston Monday lecture in the Telescope in which he identified modern liberalism as really libertinism, a damning association indeed for United Brethren.[2] From Bishop Seybert onward both Evangelicals and United Brethren provided leadership and support for the temperance and prohibition causes.[3] The moral argument remained a strong and appealing one, as in this sarcastic attack on Swedenborgianism:

> Mr. Swedenborg in his "Doctrine concerning Charity," in describing the delights and pleasures which are for the use and recreation of glorified spirits in the Heavenly state, says:--"Besides which, there are convivialities, feasts, entertainments, and all kinds of merry-making; games which are played at home, with dice, billiards, and cards; and dances in wedding parties, and at festive meetings."
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> A correspondent of the New Jerusalem Messenger, remarks that "when New Church people (Swedenborgians) indulge in dancing or other amusements, (cards and billiards we suppose) they do not think or feel that they are doing wrong." And why should they feel a twinging of conscience for card playing or dancing, if the holy saints, martyrs and apostles now spend a portion of their time in such recreations. We cannot help laughing, however, when we think of the extreme awkwardness with which most good people will handle the cards or dance a polka, when they first arrive in the Swedenborg heaven, owing to their entire want of practice in these amusements, and even aversion to them, in this world.[4]

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[1] Isaiah Potter, "Thoughts on Religious Excitement," RT, September 19, 1855, p. 6.

[2] RT, January 7, 1880, pp. 2-3.

[3] Seybert, passim, beginning with IX (January 2, 1837), 98.

[4] RT, January 23, 1856, p. 78.

This merry moralism was widespread in American Protestantism and provided the stimulus for Horace Bushnell's search for "an alternative to the flat common-sense moralism that threatened to reduce theology to inanity."[1] The accent on a carefully-defined moral code remained an integral part of that strong, resilient alloy made up of reverence for Scripture, Christian experience, and common sense that was the theology of mid-nineteenth-century Evangelicals and United Brethren.

This simple compound continued to be the content of theological training in study course, ministerial institute, and eventually in theological seminaries. Obviously, some aspects of the "great tradition" of Christian thought are missing. Church history and historical theology were not major concerns. It is true that these people were more "isolated" and "parochial" than such groups as American Lutherans of Scandinavian origin.[2] Perhaps this was because Evangelicals and United Brethren lacked a "sense" of tradition. Because they both were young churches they did not possess a wealth of traditions peculiar to them as distinct denominations. They had first to develop their own traditions before they could properly appreciate the "great tradition" of Christianity writ large. No denomination which has arisen in America has fully and appreciatively embraced this larger tradition without first developing, cultivating, and treasuring a more limited one of its own.

Theological Study Begins in Earnest

Although "practical and empirical theology" was an important part of the theological activity of Evangelicals and United Brethren, it does not

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[1]Barbara M. Cross, Horace Bushnell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 114.

[2]Sydney E. Ahlstrom, "Tradition in Transit and Tension," Encounter, XX (Summer, 1959), 327.

comprise the whole story. Sydney Ahlstrom has helped to correct the stereotype of "the untheological American,"[1] and his corrective applies to Evangelicals and United Brethren as well, especially during the second half of the nineteenth century. Throughout this middle period there was an acceleration of interest in more serious theological inquiry. Although this quickening continued to be aimed towards engaging in combat with the foes which beset the church, it did signal a "coming of age" in theology. This attentiveness to serious theological activity is most conspicuous in the greater interest shown in adequate training for ministers.

Preparation for the Ministry

Even before the crescendo of sentiment in favor of formal education and theological training for ministers began to mount, there were many who realized the value of such preparation. Among the pioneer preachers there were those who knew both their Bible and "their heads of theology."[2] A number of these men had been teachers; hence they entered the ministry with some educational preparation. Even a man like Bishop Seybert was no advocate of ignorance. On the one hand, he could respond to a solicitation for higher education funds with this cry of distress: "Lord, help us or we are ruined. O God, protect us from the curse of the ungodly university educated hounds and wolves!"[3] However, on one rainy day he was elated on discovering that the hotel in which he was staying had a "large library of very fine books wherein I had much profit."[4] On another occasion when he

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[1]Sydney E. Ahlstrom, "Theology in America: A Historical Survey," The Shaping of American Religion, eds. James Ward Smith and A. Leland Jamison (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961), I, 232-321.

[2]Drury, History, p. 421. [3]Seybert, XIV (March 25, 1846), 4.

[4]Seybert, XV (November 8, 1849), 82.

was called upon to settle a controversy over rebaptism, he was fully able to quote from the Augsburg Confession.[1] His colleague, Bishop Long, spent large blocks of time on serious theological study.[2] Long's gift of books to the Illinois Conference in 1848 stimulated them to start a library.[3]

While the official bodies of both denominations were taking action in the forties and fifties to foster more adequate theological and general educational preparation for the ministry, individual leaders progressively increased their support.[4] In an important editorial the venerable John Dreisbach clarified the position of the Evangelical Association with regard to the study of theology. There had been considerable ambiguity inasmuch as the General Conference had persistently prohibited the Annual Conferences from erecting a theological school. Dreisbach did not speak officially, but as the esteemed patriarch and most prolific hymn-writer of the church,[5] his words carried weight. A correspondent had written, wondering if theology were not to be studied by those who were going to preach. He replied at length:

> It is every Christian's duty, and more especially the duty of those who are called of God to preach the Gospel, that they diligently apply themselves to the study of Theology;--Divinity--called "the science of God and divine things; or the science which teaches the existence, character, and attributes of God, his laws and government, the doctrines

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[1]William H. Watson, History of the Michigan Conference of the Evangelical Church, 1838-1940 (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: The Evangelical Press, 1942), p. 18.

[2]Yeakel, Long, p. 194. [3]Seybert, XV (June 20, 1848), 25.

[4]One correspondent to the Messenger, Z. Hornberger, admits that the denomination has been deficient in its concern and provision for educational opportunities: "While the Evangelical Association was vigilantly guarding against one error, another nearly as bad, crept in among us; she had nearly lost sight of that system which aims at the higher improvement of the moral and intellectual faculties of the soul" ("Education," EM, February 7, 1855, p. 19).

[5]Yoder, pp. 357-359.

we are to believe, and the duties we are to practice." And in order to enter on, and pursue this all-important study, the common and higher institutions of learning are intended for those who apply to be instructed; because, by receiving a thorough scientific education, the mind becomes more expanded, the ideas are brightened and increased, to comprehend things and objects more rationally and correctly, both as to their causes and effects, at all events, such is the case when schools are conducted in a proper manner, and according to true philosophy and pure Christian principles. Thus, then, natural theology--"the knowledge we have of God from his works, by the light of nature and reason,"--is to be taught. And "revealed theology is that which is to be learned only from revelation"--the Bible; hence, where the Bible is read in schools, it may truly be said that theology is thereby introduced and taught. Also moral theology is taught when the divine laws relating to our manners and actions, that is, our moral duties, are made plain to the pupils. And when the doctrines of religion, as objects of faith, are explained, it is called speculative theology; and that which is denominated scholastic theology--school theology--"is that which proceeds by reasoning, or which derives the knowledge of several divine things from certain established principles of faith." Now, we would here state, for the information of our respected readers, that the prohibitory clause is not to be so understood or explained, as if the Evangelical Association or its General Conference were opposed to the study of Theology. No; this is not the sense which was intended to be conveyed by said clause. But, nevertheless, they do denounce the dire practice of educating young men for the Gospel Ministry, who are not in a regenerated state by grace, and consequently not called of God to this sacred office.[1]

Responsible persons were beginning to realize that better education was an absolute necessity if ministers were to be effective. Conversions were not likely to be forthcoming if the representatives of the gospel were not well trained.[2] Nor were they likely to triumph over infidels and heretics.[3]

Some remained unconvinced of the value of theological training. To them theological education not only had no relevance for achieving success

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[1]John Dreisbach, "Our Higher School Institutions," EM, December 26, 1855, p. 204.

[2]"Why are there not More Candidates for the Ministry?" EM, December 13, 1865, p. 394.

[3]RT, November 26, 1862, p. 51. Cf. "The War on Creeds," reprinted from the Oberlin Evangelist, which defends examining candidates for the ministry as to their theology (RT, January 30, 1856, p. 81).

in revivals; bringing in a minister trained in a theological seminary was a good way to bring a revival to an end.[1] Even John Dreisbach asserted that although a "good theological school" is an acceptable means of training men for the ministry, it was not necessarily the best method for the Evangelical Association. Preachers must study theology, but this need not be in a school. "Thousands," declared Dreisbach, "have studied it while they were following the plow, and after they became preachers have continued to study as long as they lived and labored."[2]

Conversion of the sinner was the scale by which the worth of theological education could be tested. John Lawrence, Dreisbach's editorial counterpart among United Brethren, was convinced that theological education could not pass this test. He contrasted two men he had known who labored side by side in a community, one educated and the other not. The man with little education won two hundred people through revivals, whereas there was no tangible evidence of the good the other man did. The obvious peroration:

> The above facts (and such examples are by no means rare,) very plainly show that however long a man "has trained and developed" his powers, however much cut and dried theology he may have acquired at Yale or Andover, however many musty sermons of dry divinity he may have treasured up in his mind, yet these, all these, are of themselves but poor qualifications for the ministry. A barren mind and a frigid heart make all endowments look lean as certain kine, which Pharaoh saw in his dream, upon the banks of the Nile.[3]

Two years before Lawrence's censure of theological seminary training, Jeremiah Kenoyer had written an impassioned plea against even college

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[1] "Who Are the Best Ministers?" EM, May 22, 1849, p. 40; RT, April 17, 1861, p. 132.

[2] John Dreisbach, "Theology in Our Seminaries," EM, December 9, 1858, p. 196. See John Dreisbach, "Studying joined with Prayer," EM, May 22, 1850, p. 38; "Difference between Practical and Speculative Religion," EM, May 8, 1851, p. 36.

[3] John Lawrence, Editorial, RT, December 17, 1851, p. 62.

training for ministers. His was not the voice of a closed-minded bigot. He simply believed that "the people will not regard a sermon however plain it may be if they think it has been studied out in college." Already, he noticed, the sermons of Bishop Edwards did not have the forcible effect they should because of Edwards' association with the cause of higher education.[1] Kenoyer was afraid that colleges and seminaries would rob the church of her spiritual power:

> Brethren, I am afraid of them. Already the idea of an educated ministry is showing itself, in various places. In one of our Eastern Conferences, the horn has grown so large and speaks such marvelous things, as virtually to declare, that you should not send a man into the world, to preach the gospel to every creature, (that is, we should not join the conference and the itinerancy, and go forth and preach according to the rules of the church,) without first cramming his head full of grammar.
>
> And worse and worse, a General Conference is passed and not one word of reprimand do I see for this manifest departure from the simple rules of our Fathers.[2]

Kenoyer's letter showed that he was swimming against the stream.[3] Prejudice against education for ministers was steadily diminishing.

Towards Theological Seminaries

The reasons for establishing theological seminaries were more social than theological. United Brethren moved towards opening a theological school when it became evident that they must do so in order to keep up with the rising level of education of the masses.[4] W. B. McKee, who became a

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[1] Edwards had only twelve months of formal schooling in his life (Drury, History, p. 434).

[2] Jeremiah Kenoyer, Letter to the Editor, RT, October 17, 1849, pp. 90-91. Prejudice against theological training in college and seminary persisted among German Methodists in America at least through the seventies (Wittke, William Nast, pp. 138-139).

[3] Editor William Hanby wrote a forcible refutation of his position in the same issue.

[4] "Necessity of Education in the Ministry," (RT, September 25, 1850, p. 13) advises that "if you wish to have an influence over the minds of others you should not be behind them in improvement."

prominent churchman in Ohio, openly criticized Telescope editor John Lawrence for not lending his weight to the efforts to promote higher education and theological training. Arguing that mankind is advancing in intelligence, he urged his fellow United Brethren to "keep pace with sister churches, and operate on all classes of society."[1]

In the 1869 General Conference the Rev. S. Lindsay reported that some congregations would not accept ministers whose education was deficient. Such congregations, argued Lindsay, would gladly support the establishment of a theological school.[2] W. J. Shuey pointed out that United Brethren young men were already attending seminaries. The question was simply whether it was wise to risk losing their talent by failing to provide a theological seminary which United Brethren could support.[3]

Some continued to feel that the church was called to minister to the lowly and uneducated,[4] but their voices were increasingly ignored. Gradually during the fifties and sixties the sentiment favoring the establishment of theological seminaries mounted. One by one objections were removed as a variety of commentators pointed out the wisdom of opening such schools. Isaiah Potter, a denominational leader and agitator for higher education,[5] saw the anomaly of providing training in rhetoric, elocution, logic,

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[1]W. B. McKee, "A Theological Seminary," RT, December 26, 1855, p. 64. See H. A. Thompson's report for the Board of Education in Proceedings of the Seventeenth General Conference of the United Brethren in Christ (Dayton, Ohio: United Brethren Printing Establishment, 1877), pp. 86-100; the records of United Brethren General Conferences are hereafter cited as GCJUB. Also see J. W. Etter, "Ministerial Qualifications--Intellectual," RT, January 15, 1879, p. 9.

[2]GCJUB, 1869, p. 189. [3]Ibid., p. 187.

[4]C. W. Witt, "United Brethrenism as it once was," RT, April 21, 1847, p. 306.

[5]Edwin H. Sponseller, Crusade for Education (Frederick, Maryland: Edwin H. Sponseller, 1950), pp. 103-155.

geography, history, and other disciplines, and failing to provide academic training in divinity. It reminded him of a "father who should furnish his children with the finest clothing, the most stately palaces, etc.; but he refuses to give them bread." What pity that students' heads "be crammed full of Euclid, Livy, Homer, etc. on leaving college; but, for anything the college has done for the student in Divinity, he will not be able to tell you what repentance is!"[1] The lack of a theological school was named as one reason why so few young men were entering the ministry.[2]

The turning point came when Daniel Berger, editor of the Telescope and far more favorable to theological education than his predecessor Lawrence, wrote a very forceful editorial advocating not just theological departments in colleges, but a theological seminary.[3] Sufficient support had been generated to cause the next General Conference to pass the enabling legislation for Union Biblical Seminary. The new editor elected at that General Conference, Milton Wright (father of the famed Wright brothers), added his support to the cause, both in his editorials and in the amount of space he devoted to news about all steps which were being taken leading up to the actual opening of the school.[4] Finally the day came when he could announce that the professors had been appointed and arrangements had been made for the opening of the school the following month--September,

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[1]Isaiah Potter, "The Qualifications of the Ministry," RT, September 14, 1853, p. 4.

[2]"Why So Few Young Men Enter the Ministry," RT, December 20, 1854, p. 60. Jonathan Weaver of Winfield, Ohio, later to be a bishop (1865-1893), chimed in with his support when he was only thirty-two years of age (RT, December 3, 1856, p. 56).

[3]Daniel Berger, Editorial, RT, April 24, 1867, p. 260.

[4]See Milton Wright, Editorial, RT, July 7, 1869, p. 348.

1871, in Dayton, Ohio.[1]

The influence of German immigration.--Social forces also affected Evangelicals' rising interest in theological education, but in a different way. Remaining far more German than the United Brethren, Evangelicals felt the full impact of the tremendous surge of German immigrants in the middle decades of the nineteenth century.

Important impetus towards establishing a theological school was provided by T. G. Clewell in a series of editorials, most of which were written in 1860, in which he forcefully called the attention of the denomination to their obligation to minister adequately to the flood of Germans who were coming to America and also to the relative unfitness of the present ministry for the task. Clewell pointed out that the challenge facing the church was far different than that which prevailed in the early years. No longer was the problem one of preaching against "a lifeless, spiritless formality, void of mental force, as well as sound morals."[2] Now the formidable foe was infidelity. Clewell was quite aware that a sizable group of those Germans who emigrated as a result of the failures of the revolutionary movements of 1848-1849 had been affected by the atheistic rationalism which pervaded some of the liberal movements of that time.[3] And these were men who were no mean antagonists:

> Educated, talented, polite in their manners, and by no means sparing in a bombast that is coupled with a remarkable air of suavity and

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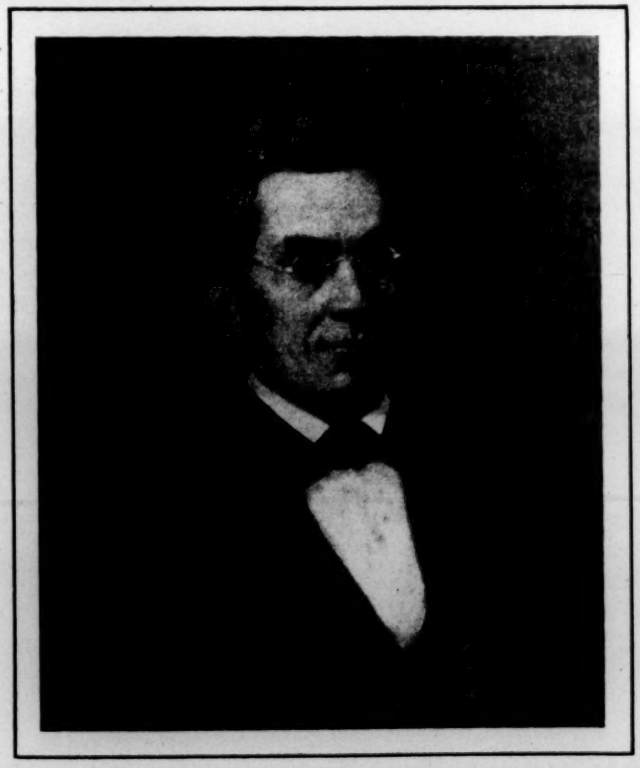
[1] RT, August 9, 1871, p. 388.

[2] T. G. Clewell, "The Germans--How to Reach Them," EM, August 23, 1860, pp. 132-133.

[3] See Carl Wittke, Refugees of Revolution (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1952), chap. x. Wittke gives an extended account of German immigration to America in the nineteenth century in his We Who Built America (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1939), chap. ix.

T. G. CLEWELL
(Courtesy of the Rev. Roy B. Leedy, Lakeside, Ohio)



W. W. ORWIG
(Courtesy of Evangelical Theological Seminary, Naperville, Illinois)

> modesty, they have put themselves at once at the head of the Germans in our country. While they improved, they have also monopolized the German press of this country to a great extent, and while thus elevating the German element to a higher degree of importance among us, they are also exerting a baneful influence upon the morals of the Germans, whose teachers and leaders they have become.[1]

Clewell found the ministry of his denomination prepared to fight "dead formalism," but hardly the clever arguments of "polished infidels." It was a quite unequal contest, for the uneducated preachers were no match for "scholars from German universities, who speak so glibly, write so forcibly, are orators of no mean stature, and can sway the minds of the ignorant populace so successfully." The frank, straightforward editor was confident that truth would prevail, but saw it presently suffering through "the incompetency of its advocates."[2] Reluctantly he confessed that if the outcome depended on "the comparative mental strength or scientific ability of its adherents, then, in all probability, at this time, among the Germans of our country, it would be decided against us."[3]

The perceptive editor concludes that in order to be responsible stewards something must be done about this depressing situation. Ending his lament, he commends his church for providing an antidote to the "profligate, impious, inconsistent ministry" which had plagued German churches, both in America and in Germany. But what is needed is that "we must add to the piety of our ministry, a thorough erudition." Most of the ministers, taken as they now are "from the shop, the farm, from behind the counter," must be given far more training in order that they may take the offensive against the infidel.

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[1] T. G. Clewell, "The Germans--How to Reach Them," EM, August 23, 1860, pp. 132-133.

[2] Ibid. [3] Ibid., September 6, 1860, p. 140.

> They should be well posted in all the arguments the infidels use. They should be acquainted with, and be able to refute, the arguments of such writers as Strauss, Feuerbach, Tom Paine, and others, should be familiar with German writers and their works in general, they should be able to lecture on any topic that might succeed in bringing out the Germans who cannot otherwise be persuaded to enter a church; they should be ready to defend through the press, often through the local press, the truths of the Gospel when assailed, and on all occasions be ready to measure swords with their opponents, not as timid, cowering apologists, that wish to be let alone; but as bold, defiant champions, who, being conscious of the strength and justice of their cause, mean to stand on the aggressive.[1]

The church could provide such preparation, contended Clewell, by establishing what he calls "missionary institutes," which would be virtually the same as theological seminaries. This malodorous title he is hesitant to give them; they would function to train men in understanding the Bible, "but also in the heresies and errors to which Christianity has been exposed from time to time, and how to deal with them now."[2] These would be open to young men who may or may not have had a college education. Someone then picked up his suggestion, modified it, and advocated starting such a department in the existing educational institutions, for the students of the theological department would have the valuable experience of "associating daily with those who are out of Christ," and presumably, of trying to convert them.[3]

After the interruption of the Civil War Clewell returned to his theme to plead once again for the establishment of what he now called "biblical institutes:"

> Our Evangelical Association must be prepared to furnish to her people, especially her candidates for the ministry, a better and more thorough training, and a more thorough acquaintance with the theology of the Bible; and thus assist them in arming themselves to meet the opponents of the Bible faith. . . . We do not want to astonish the world by

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[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid., September 20, 1860, pp. 148-149.

[3] "Ministerial Training--A Missionary Institute," EM, November 29, 1860, p. 185.

> producing great theologians. We need practical, common-sense men, who are willing to labor, who are not disrobed of their own natures, and clad in a Saul's armor, or the glaring vestments of a school. We do not want men to go and spend five or six years in a theological school, in order to be daubed D.D.'s; but we do want them to add to their piety and divine call, a decent knowledge of the truths they are to teach, the errors they are to meet, and to be taught how to handle the sword of the Spirit with dexterity and skill.[1]

Evangelicals were slow to respond to Clewell's solicitations, for although they felt the forcefulness of his arguments, they were afraid they might capitulate to the same influences which they felt were responsible for ruining the ministry in Germany. Sentiment in favor of a theological school began to mount when Clewell's earlier argument in favor of "missionary institutes" began to have effect on those interested in the new missionary efforts of the denomination. Finally, the 1867 General Conference approved the bishops' recommendation to establish a Biblical or Missionary Institute.[2] Reuben Yeakel, editor of the Evangelical Messenger and later the first head of the school eventually established, surely allayed some fears by this pietistic prescription for the projected school:

> It may be proper to add here that we ought not to establish such Institutes with a view of producing great theologians--masters in scientific, dogmatic, and polemic theology. We need competent, practical laborers for the vineyard of the Lord. Pastoral theology and Scriptural exegesis are the main topics required. We ought, therefore, appoint such men as teachers who are experimentally well acquainted with our itinerant work in all its departments and know the practical part of the work throughout; men of sound piety and experience, and men too, of considerable age and an unsullied reputation, so that their pupils can look up to them as to fathers and safe guides.[3]

Union Biblical Institute was eventually established in connection with North-Western College in Naperville, Illinois, and in 1876 the first six students were enrolled. In his report of the formal opening of the

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[1] T. G. Clewell, "Biblical Institutes," EM, April 15, 1869, p. 116.

[2] Eller, These Evangelical United Brethren, p. 100.

[3] Reuben Yeakel, Editorial, EM, October 5, 1871, p. 316.

school Professor Anton Huelster assured the readers of the Messenger that the emphasis was to be on Biblical studies. The instructors, moreover, had taken a vow to be loyal to the doctrines and discipline of the Evangelical Association and to maintain the school as one of "biblical theology."[1]

Curricula.--Both Evangelicals and United Brethren expected their new theological institutions to be pre-eminently schools of Biblical studies and bulwarks of orthodoxy.[2] One might easily suppose that nothing but the Bible was studied at these "biblical" schools. However, a look at the curricula shows that this was not the case. When Union Biblical Institute was still a part of North-Western College and not in any sense a graduate school, the theological course was simply one of the courses of the college, including elocution, arithmetic, grammar, geography, United States History, "Rhetoric, Logic, Psychology, Moral Science, Evidences of Christianity, Natural Theology and Butler's Analogy of Natural and Revealed Religion or the studies laid down in the German Course of North Western College as a substitute for the above."[3] When the school opened as a separate institution, it was a two-year course and included study of church history, exegesis, doctrinal theology, homiletics, and pastoral theology.[4]

An instructor at Union Biblical Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, gives this description of theological studies at the United Brethren school in 1874:

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[1]Anton Huelster, "Formal Opening of the Union Biblical Institute," EM, September 6, 1877, p. 285.

[2]See "The Conservation of Theology," RT, March 17, 1875, p. 196; R. Wahl, "Come to Our Seminary," RT, March 24, 1875, p. 201. Also see Bishop John Dickson's address, "The Work of the Ministry," given before the students of Union Biblical Seminary (RT, May 19, 1875, pp. 265-266).

[3]EM, March 26, 1874, pp. 100-101.

[4]E. F. George, Fifty Fruitful Years, A Brief Sketch of the History of the Evangelical Theological Seminary, 1878-1927 (Naperville, Illinois, 1926), pp. 14-15.

> As to theological training, when a student leaves for the theological seminary he makes up his mind to set apart a number of years to be spent in the study of theology. He then studies his Bible more carefully than ever, much of it in the original tongues. He goes over the whole ground of the history of the church, from the nativity of Christ to the present time. He recalls to mind his classical knowledge which he was taught in his college years; or, if he is not a college graduate, he supplements this deficiency in one way or another. He learns how the dogma of the church was developed, and the history of its several creeds; how the various heresies sprung up; how popery, how skepticism and rationalism found their way into the church, and how they were defeated.[1]

Eight years later this medley of studies was organized into a fourfold division of theology--historical, exegetical, systematic, and practical.[2]

To estimate the importance and impact of the theological schools in their early years is difficult. In 1885 the Rev. E. S. Lorenz gave the following statistics for United Brethren: less than six per cent of the ministry were college graduates; only five per cent had taken a seminary course, while less than two per cent had taken both courses.[3] Even if one accepts Lorenz's figures as authoritative, it is not clear what conclusions one should draw. Perhaps five per cent is a commendable ratio after only fourteen years of operation of the seminary. Quite early, leadership began to come from those who were seminary graduates, and one can be certain that the small but growing group of seminary-trained ministers exerted influence far beyond their numerical strength.

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[1]R. Wahl, "The Nature of Seminary Life," RT, August 12, 1874, pp. 861, 868. Cf. RT, September 8, 1875, p. 396.

[2]A. W. Drury, "Union Biblical Seminary," RT, August 16, 1882, p. 737. Cf. A. W. Drury, "Theological Knowledge and Ministerial Training," RT, September 9, 1885, p. 578. Cf. J. P. Landis, "A Course of Theological Study," RT, August 19, 1885, p. 529.

[3]E. S. Lorenz, "The Preacher and His Sermon," RT, January 21, 1885, p. 49.

The Trek to Yale Divinity School

One indicator of the rising quality of theological education during these years is the fact that a growing number of United Brethren were attending Yale Divinity School. Who was first is not certain, but the earliest evidence of interest was the Rev. G. C. Lamb's sketch of the faculty and the course of instruction in 1870. Lamb's purpose was to generate enthusiasm for the new United Brethren theological school to be founded in Dayton, Ohio, the following year.[1] Perhaps this article provided the impetus which sent a flock of young men off to New Haven to study theology. In 1879 a "letter from Yale College" gives the information that A. L. DeLong, a graduate of Otterbein University, was one of the twenty graduates of the Divinity School; a report of Noah Porter's commencement address is also included.[2] In the same issue of the Telescope was a letter from W. M. Beardshear comparing Yale College with Otterbein, his alma mater. Presumably he too was a student at the Divinity School. (Class of '81; left w/o BD '80)

Why were United Brethren young men avoiding their own theological school? The answer lies in the fact that even in 1880, nine years after the founding of Union Biblical Seminary, few if any college graduates were enrolled in it.[3] Therefore, the graduates of colleges supported by the church who wanted to prepare for the ministry at a seminary almost invariably went to other schools, such as Allegheny, Lane, Princeton, Union,

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[1] G. C. Lamb, "Yale Theological Seminary," RT, December 28, 1870, p. 129.

[2] "Letter from Yale College," RT, July 9, 1879, p. 9.

[3] According to George Stephenson, Swedish Lutherans had the same problem, for in 1890 only two of the twenty graduates of Augustana Seminary held college degrees (The Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration, p. 384).

Yale, and Boston.[1]

The migration to Yale continued throughout the eighties. In 1881 J. A. Loose of the class of 1876 at Otterbein was the "first-honor" graduate of Yale Divinity School and received the prize of $700 for two years to be used in graduate work either at Yale or abroad in Europe and Palestine.[2] In 1883 another United Brethren student at Yale, E. D. Mund, gave this explanation of the gathering of his fellow-churchmen at Yale.

> Next to Union Biblical Seminary, the favorite resort of United Brethren theological students seems to be Yale Divinity-School. I only know of seven outside of Union Biblical Seminary, and six of those seven are here. The time was when our college-graduates went to Allegheny Seminary, where few of them escaped being Calvinized and Presbyterianated, if I may coin a couple of words exactly to my purpose. Many of them left the Church, or if they remained with us so lost sympathy with its doctrines and usages as to largely unfit them for usefulness in it. Others went to Drew, with practically the same results, as far as their loyalty to the Church was concerned. Recently the tide has almost exclusively been Yaleward; and the Church may be well satisfied that it is so, as long as some of our young men are not satisfied to go to our own seminary.[3]

The church "may be well satisfied," according to Mund, because there is no proselyting spirit there. Of fourteen students, only two have left the Church. Mund attended Union Biblical Seminary, also, for he compares the two schools, noting his preference for the United Brethren school. In addition to favoring instruction by textbook rather than by lecture, he adds that

> above all, Union Biblical Seminary is to be preferred because of its practical spirit and methods. It gives a very decidedly more useful preparation for actual work, especially in our own church. Yale is scholarly, philosophical, and cultured, but also impractical. I have said that its theology is but little Calvinistic, but I must say its methods of work are thoroughly so. The edification of believers, that is, of the elect, is tacitly assumed to be the chief work of the ministry. This does not accord with the genius of our church, whose chief

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[1] RT, April 21, 1880, p. 2. [2] RT, June 1, 1881, p. 568.

[3] E. D. Mund, "New England Letter," RT, January 17, 1883, p. 257.

> mission from the beginning has been, and I hope will continue to be, the conversion of sinners. Eternity has room for the edification of saints but none for the conversion of sinners.[1]

Unlike the counsel of the superintendent of public instruction of Ohio, who had advised students to spend their first two years in seminary in a western school, then go to the East for "polish, culture, and broadening," Mund suggests that if young men are so inclined, they would do well to spend three years at Union Biblical Seminary, graduate there, and then go to Yale for an additional year and graduate there.[2]

Three of the six United Brethren students at Yale Divinity School in 1883 were graduating seniors. They were John H. Albert, nephew of Bishop E. B. Kephart; William L. Beatty; and E. S. Lorenz, who gave by request of the faculty as his commencement address, "The Characteristics of the United Brethren in Christ." Lorenz then went abroad to study for an additional year.[3] This interest in Yale Divinity School continued into the twentieth century.

Theological Education by Study Course and Institute

The alternative to theological education in a seminary was to enroll in the course of study. Before long all young men entering the ministry were expected to demonstrate their knowledge of theology and church history as well as Biblical content. Because almost all books available for study were written by men outside the denominations, young ministers unavoidably came into contact with the larger theological world. Although such

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[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid.

[3] RT, March 7, 1883, p. 373; RT, June 6, 1883, p. 579. Throughout the eighties there were others who were drawn to Yale to do their theological preparation. Two of these were Henry Stauffer (RT, February 15, 1888, p. 98) and L. F. John, who reported on Joseph Cook's appearance in Marquand Chapel in 1885 (RT, December 16, 1885, pp. 802-803).

Methodist authors as Watson, Fletcher, Wakefield,[1] and Pope were the mainstays, the course of study also introduced students to other points of view as well.

Evangelicals studied books by Thomas Dick of the Scottish Secession Church,[2] Karl Hagenbach of the German "mediating theology" of the mid-nineteenth century,[3] and the leader of American low-church Episcopalians, Charles P. McIlvaine.[4] Also read were such works of American Presbyterians as David Nelson's Cause and Cure of Infidelity, William Shedd's Homiletics, and Henry B. Smith's Lectures on Apologetics.[5] Van Oosterzee, whose Theology of the New Testament was on the reading list, was a Dutch preacher and theologian (1817-1882) who avoided "dogmatic speculation" in the pulpit, rejected negative criticism of the Bible, and maintained a "distinctly supernaturalist position," all of which were congenial to Evangelicals.[6]

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[1]Wakefield had learned part of his theology from George Christian Knapp, one of the last exponents of pietism at Halle. See Samuel Wakefield, A Complete System of Christian Theology (Cincinnati: Cranston and Stowe, 1869), p. 4; Georg Müller, "Knapp, Georg Christian," The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, VI (1910), 354-355.

[2]"Dick, Thomas," The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, III (1909), 419.

[3]R. Stähelin, "Hagenbach, Karl Rudolf," The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, V (1909), 115.

[4]"McIlvaine, Charles Pettit," The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, VII (1910), 114-115.

[5]Both Shedd and Smith taught systematic theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York ("Shedd, William Greenough Thayer," The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, X [1911], 388-389; "Smith, Henry Boynton," The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, X [1911], 460). Also see "Nelson, David," The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, VIII (1910), 110.

[6]S. D. van Veen, "Oosterzee, Jan Jakob van," The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, VIII (1910), 241-242.

Several of Upham's works were being read. Thomas Upham, who taught at Bowdoin College, was interested in Madame Guyon's mystical doctrines and was well known as an opponent of Kant's philosophy.[1]

United Brethren were reading most of these books and some others as well.[2] On the course of study from 1873 until 1885 was the Brief Outline of the Evidences of the Christian Religion by Archibald Alexander (1772-1851), staunch defender of orthodoxy at Princeton. John Harris's The Great Commission was the English Congregationalist's prize essay on Christian missions.[3] Daniel S. Gregory's Christian Ethics was added to the list in 1889;[4] it replaced Francis Wayland's The Elements of Moral Science, 1835, a popular textbook throughout the United States which employed the traditional casuistical approach.[5] United Brethren also used two of Theodor Christlieb's books. He was a German churchman whose participation in the Evangelical Alliance, rejection of historical criticism, and interest in evangelism made him attractive to denominational leaders.[6] Alexander Vinet's Homiletics appeared on the 1873 course of study. Vinet was a

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[1]"Upham, Thomas Cogswell," Dictionary of American Biography, ed. Dumas Malone, XIX (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943), 123-124. See EM, September 6, 1860, p. 137, and January 29, 1884, p. 34, for two of the Evangelicals' courses of study.

[2]Discipline of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ (Dayton, Ohio: United Brethren Publishing House, 1873, 1877, 1881, 1885, 1889).

[3]"Harris, John," The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, V (1909), 160.

[4]Gregory was a Presbyterian who taught at Wooster College and later was president of Lake Forest College ("Gregory, Daniel Seelye," The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, V [1909], 75).

[5]R. M. Wenley, "Casuistry," Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, ed. James Hastings, III (1911), 239-247.

[6]E. Sachsse, "Christlieb, Theodor," The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, III (1909), 46-47.

French Protestant who strongly accented sanctification, the subjective aspect of religion, and man's need to go to Christ--not the church.[1]

While courses of study were being provided for young ministerial students, the older ministers who had not had the benefits of a course of study were not forgotten. Several Conferences conducted theological institutes, which were one or two-day colloquies at which papers were read and discussed. In addition to the usual pietistic topics of temperance, sinful fashions, and repentance, there were discussions of other themes which taxed the theological training and ingenuity of the participants. The agenda for one such meeting in the United Brethren Muskingum Conference suggests either that the leaders of the project were ambitious, or else that theological learning was thin:

> Sermons on Existence of God, Atonement, Regeneration, Call to the Ministry; Essays on Faith, Heaven, Death, Spread of the Gospel, Jealousy, Origin and existence of the Devil, Secrecy, Future Punishment, Future Judgment, Authenticity of the Bible, Slavery, Justice of the divine requirements, Revivals, Justification, Sabbath schools, Duty of the Church, Christian Hope. Elocution, Astronomy, Natural Philosophy.[2]

Beginning in 1857 similar meetings were held by the Evangelicals.[3] At the first meeting in Greensburg, Ohio, these papers were presented and "thoroughly discussed and criticized both as to orthodoxy and rhetorical construction:"

> "The Fall and the Consequent Depravity of Human Nature," George Doll.
> "Redemption Effected by Jesus Christ," Conrad Trammer.
> "Nature of True Repentance," J. M. Haug.
> "The Justification of the Sinner before God," C. Deike.

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[1] Paul T. Fuhrmann, Extraordinary Christianity, The Life and Thought of Alexander Vinet (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1964), pp. 24, 101.

[2] RT, April 27, 1859, p. 135.

[3] Roy B. Leedy, The Evangelical Church in Ohio (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: The Evangelical Press, 1959), p. 132.

"Sanctification."
"The Divinity of the Bible," T. G. Clewell, editor of the Evangelical Messenger.
"The Best Means to Resist the Increasing Power of Intemperance in the Use of Strong Drink," J. J. Kanaga.[1]

Such conferences were an integral part of theological training for many years.

The Effect of Theological Training

By 1870 both the Evangelical and United Brethren Churches were convinced of the value of adequate theological preparation for the ministry and of the importance of serious theological inquiry. It would be misleading, however, to overstate the case, for the pietistic strain in favor of the practical and away from the theoretical persisted and showed up repeatedly, particularly among United Brethren. Even Bishop Davis, president of Otterbein University, played down the intellectual qualifications necessary for theological study.[2]

Other prominent leaders exhibit the pietistic bias against formal theology. Wrote the Rev. I. L. Kephart, later editor of the Telescope:

> Mr. Editor:--Is there not much precious time wasted in the discussion of what are generally termed "nice points in theology," that might be employed to better purpose? It seems to me that our duty is to deal with existing evils, to aim at correcting existing wrongs, to labor to ameliorate present sufferings, and guard against approaching calamities, rather than spend time in endeavoring to ascertain what was or was not the condition of things six thousand years ago. Suppose two should disagree as to the original condition of man--whether holy or not. . . . Better accept the facts as they are known to exist,--man's present depravity, his need of a Savior, his proneness to evil, the possibility of his being recovered from a life of sin, from habits of drunkenness and licentiousness--and go to work in good earnest, with a hope of correcting some of the present evils of the day.[3]

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[1] Ibid. These district meetings were given support in the Episcopal Address to the Evangelical General Conference of 1863 (Albright, p. 266).

[2] Lewis Davis, "Study of Theology," RT, April 18, 1855, p. 125.

[3] I. L. Kephart, "Hints," RT, January 24, 1866, p. 81. The current editor, Daniel Berger, appears to concur with Kephart's views.

In an address delivered at an anniversary celebration of Lane Theological Seminary in 1867 the Rev. Henry Garst, later president of Otterbein University (1886-1889), minimized the differences in doctrine and polity between the various denominations as "largely speculative, and awakened inquiry exerts its influence here also to correct error and harmonize differences."[1] Both Kephart and Garst may well have learned these views during their student days at Otterbein University, where Bishop Lewis Davis was president for twenty years.[2]

The anti-intellectual side of church life has too long been over-emphasized, however, Despite the lack of a strong theological tradition, interest in theological study and discussion did steadily accelerate. At least as early as 1867 there was a theological association at Otterbein University for the edification and instruction of pre-theological students.[3] In the years that followed, the defenders of theology steadily multiplied.[4] By the eighties there was a growing recognition that it was

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[1]H. Garst, "Historic Forces and Church Union," RT, May 22, 1867, p. 289.

[2]Supra, p. 98. In 1870 the editor of the Telescope replied to criticism that the Church had a very weak confession of faith, one "to which Episcopalian, Calvinist, or Armenian [sic] could subscribe--inconsistent, and susceptible of differing interpretations" (RT, September 14, 1870, p. 12). Admitting the truth of the accusations, he saw no weakness in the fact, and rejoiced in the lack of theological controversy. Neither the founders nor the present ministry were interested in establishing dogmas, but in saving souls. This did not go unchallenged, however, for in the next issue H. L. Poling wrote that some theological controversy was necessary, for the doctrine of infidels such as Paine and Hume must be refuted (RT, September 21, 1870, p. 18).

[3]See RT, June 19, 1867, p. 321, for the synopsis of an address delivered by Bishop Edwards before the association.

[4]A Telescope editorial in 1868 condemns those who would profess an aversion to theology "while professing to hold at the same time a high regard for religion" (RT, January 1, 1868, p. 132). In another article the same year the Rev. R. West defines theology's role as the very necessary completion of what philosophy has begun (R. West, "Theologos," RT, July 22, 1868, p. 361). An article in 1872, taken from the Christian Press, deplores

perfectly proper that doctrinal forms change, and this helped to justify the attention being given to the study of theology.[1]

Attacks from without, such as those of the Mercersburg theologians,[2] stimulated theological expression.[3] The editor of the Telescope surely was not the match of John W. Nevin in theological training and scholarship, but his remarks about the Mercersburg Theology do reveal his awareness of the importance of the theological issues involved. In an editorial in 1856 he was reacting to some statements in the previous issue of the Mercersburg Review about the role of the sacraments and the mediatorial function of the ministry. Wrote Lawrence:

> But the strong common sense of a Bible reading people can never regard with great favor, these theological pretenders. It will be hard to convince sound Protestants, who, with unveiled face, have been pouring

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contempt for theology (RT, February 21, 1872, p. 193). Also see "The Conservation of Theology," RT, March 17, 1875, p. 196.

[1] RT, May 14, 1884, p. 536. See H. D. Herr, "Traditional Theology," RT, July 25, 1883, p. 687. Cf. "German Theology," EM, September 17, 1856, pp. 146-147.

[2] The Mercersburg theology developed in the theological seminary of the German Reformed Church at Mercersburg, Pennsylvania, in the 1840's. It was part of a larger tendency to place greater emphasis on the church's objective heritage that may also be seen in John Henry Newman and the Oxford Movement. See James H. Nichols, Romanticism in American Theology: Nevin and Schaff at Mercersburg (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961); H. Shelton Smith, Robert T. Handy, and Lefferts A. Loetscher, American Christianity, An Historical Interpretation with Representative Documents (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), II, 68-71, 92-100.

[3] Notice was taken of the publication of the Rev. James M. Davis's book, A Plea for "New Measures," part of which appeared in the Telescope. Davis was pastor of Fifth Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, and was replying to Nevin's book, The Anxious Bench, which was an attack on Finney's revivalistic "new measures" (RT, February 28, 1844, p. 125). The editor of the Telescope had also taken note of the controversy between J. Denig and J. W. Nevin, offering to sell Denig's pamphlets for him (RT, January 3, 1844, p. 92). When Nevin resigned from his position as a professor at the Theological Seminary at Mercersburg, the editor of the Evangelical Messenger expressed the hope that "Puseyite" elements would now be eliminated from the German Reformed Church (EM, October 22, 1851, p. 79).

> over the pure and completed volume of inspiration from childhood, that they had better turn aside, and under the lead of a protestant-priest, grope about after the truth in the bewildering mazes of tradition. . . .
>
> People who are acquainted with the New Testament preachers are not very likely to desire priests in their stead.--Those who have been justified freely by faith in Jesus, who have known that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, do not feel the need of a priest's absolution.
>
> Experienced Christians, who have really and truly "tasted that the Lord is gracious," will not readily believe that at the sacramental table they eat and drink the real body and blood of Christ.
>
> Those who have been truly begotten of God, and who now enjoy heart felt religion, can scarcely regard with favor the miserable mystic nonsense of "baptismal regeneration." Such senseless palaver can only be successfully palmed upon poor priest ridden men and women, who have never seen a whole Bible in their lives.[1]

With its emphasis on creed, catechism, and tradition so antipathetic to Evangelicals and United Brethren, the Mercersburg Theology elicited other attacks upon it. One was written in a lighter vein than Lawrence's, yet setting forth clearly some of the important differences between United Brethren and the Mercersburg theologians. The method employed was to call up the Philippian jailer and imagine how the leaders of the German Reformed Church would answer him:

> "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" is the language of the midnight mourner. "Why," says the "Messenger's" correspondent, "You must first be properly instructed then you must unite with the church,--(not a sect, take care of the sects)--you must have a knowledge of the great doctrines of the church as explained by the Heidelberg Catechism, the church's only symbol. You must thus, by the divinely instituted means, receive sacramental grace and be concretely justified, and you shall be saved." "But O, can not I be saved now? can not I be forgiven and obtain peace now? This burden breaks my heart." "Well, I fear not," replies the doctor, "this is a work that requires time; you must count the cost. The German Reformed church believes in catechetical instruction, in a faith in and from the church; in the grace of the sacraments and concrete justification. I guess you will have to take the regular course. We may not set aside our three-hundred-year-old system and make a sect of ourselves."[2]

In a more serious manner the writer states his position succinctly:

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[1]John Lawrence, Editorial, RT, February 20, 1856, p. 92.

[2]"The Church and the Sects," RT, August 5, 1863, p. 193.

> We believe in the church of Jesus Christ. We believe in the sacraments as divinely appointed institutions for the good of believers. We also hold that faith must have its works. But we believe that faith is before the church and before the sacraments and before works. We do not observe these things to get faith but because we have faith. Faith is the cause, works are the effects. . . .
>
> The justification of the sinner by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the doctrine of Christ and the apostles.
>
> Justification in and from the church in the use of the sacraments is the doctrine of the German Reformed church according to the showing of the "Messenger."
>
> This bastard theology sets itself up not only against the teachings of inspired men but is a departure from one of the fundamental articles of the 16th century reformation.[1]

Other doctrinal challenges likewise induced theological activity. One was the problem of formulating correctly the doctrine of Christian perfection, which agitated the Evangelical Association from about 1857 to 1871.[2] Another was the running battle carried on during much of 1852 by the editor of the Evangelical Messenger with the editor of The Family Presbyterian.[3]

Interdenominational conferences were another source of contact with the outside world. The meetings of the Evangelical Alliance, for instance, were followed closely, attended by some, and reported in the church papers. In 1881 two United Brethren leaders, J. W. Hott (editor of the Telescope and later a bishop) and H. A. Thompson, president of Otterbein University, attended the Methodist Ecumenical Conference held in England and sent back

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ralph Kendall Schwab has given a detailed account of this extensive discussion and the conflicts that arose around it in The History of the Doctrine of Christian Perfection in the Evangelical Association (Menasha, Wisconsin: George Banta Publishing Company, 1922). Schwab concludes that "it took until 1871 for the official Wesleyan doctrine of Christian perfection, backed by the authoritative use of ecclesiastical organization and the discipline, to finally conquer the German heritage of the church on this doctrine. And since 1871, although firmly established, the doctrine of Christian perfection has gradually fallen into desuetude" (Schwab, p.110).

[3] See, for example, EM, July 7, 1852, pp. 108-109.

full reports of the proceedings.[1] Assistant Editor Tobey of the Telescope attended a Premillenarian Conference in 1878, perhaps the renowned conference in Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in New York.[2] He regarded the meetings as "truly scholarly, as well as ordinarily pious and evangelical," but he showed some discrimination in his criticism of it.[3]

Ministerial training was producing greater familiarity with church history. Articles in the church press both demonstrated this growing knowledge and helped to increase it. The form of church history they knew tended to be the pietistic concentration on the spiritual biographies of individuals that was characteristic of Gottfried Arnold and Neander, but at least it was a beginning.[4]

When Editor Clewell of the Evangelical Messenger advocated a change in the Articles of Faith in 1870, Evangelicals engaged in a flurry of theological discussion. Clewell had pointed out that the Articles of Faith were not original; they had been taken from the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, and some of them were obsolete. Even worse, he had referred to them as "Iron Jackets" in which the denomination was encased.

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[1]See the October, 1881, issues of RT.

[2]See Smith, Handy, Loetscher, II, 314.

[3]Tobey wrote: "Though we do not believe in the pre-millenial coming of Christ, we are glad to see orthodox Christians awake in some way to the fact of the coming" (RT, November 13, 1878, p. 4).

[4]See Roland Bainton's explanation of this approach to church history and its persistence at Yale Divinity School in his Yale and the Ministry (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), pp. 186-187. During 1849-1850 in the Telescope appeared a series of twelve articles by John Lawrence and Lewis Davis in which they debated whether the church was the "world's greatest benefactor" through the period of the Middle Ages, specifically the fifth through the twelfth centuries; both quoted Mosheim as their authority (RT, Vol. IX [1849-1850]). Also see RT, November 29, 1854, p. 45; RT, February 20, 1856, p. 91; S. G. Rhoads, "Thoughts on Church History," EM, October 27 and November 10, 1852, pp. 171, 180; and the editorial reply to J. Stull's references to Luther Lee's views (EM, October 13, 1859, pp. 164-165).

This inflammatory charge, together with his heresy on the doctrine of Christian perfection, resulted in his deposition from office and from the ministry, although he was reinstated in the ministry before he left to join the Methodist Church.[1] Soon after the crisis Clewell's successor, Reuben Yeakel, calmed the troubled waters with an editorial on the role which the Articles of Faith played in the church, contending that they are confined to the "objective points of theology" because they deal with matters of faith, not experience.[2]

The appearance of articles and books giving evidence of learning was another sign of the rise of theological interest. Most noteworthy of these was a ten-volume set known as the Evangelical Normal Series, which was published in 1884-85. It was designed especially for lay study and included such titles as Introduction to the Books of the Bible, Sacred Geography, Book of Chronology, Biblical Antiquities, Church History, Divine Origin of the Bible, History of the English Bible, and Natural History of the Bible. All the volumes were written by members of the Evangelical Association.[3]

Protestant Christianity has been criticized for being preoccupied with the inspiration of the Bible instead of giving proper attention to such doctrines as the sovereignty of God, the person and work of Christ, and justification by faith. Probably Evangelicals and United Brethren were as guilty of this as others. However, the rapid spread of training and interest in theology that characterized these middle years led men far beyond

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[1]Albright, pp. 272-273.

[2]Reuben Yeakel, Editorial, EM, March 9, 1871, p. 76.

[3]Albright, pp. 307-308. A. A. Smith, president of North-Western College for all but one of the first twenty-two years of its life, is another Evangelical who demonstrates understanding of theological issues; see his Baccalaureate Sermons and Addresses (Cleveland, Ohio: Thomas and Mattill, 1895), p. 60.

the doctrine of Biblical inspiration. J. W. Hott illustrates this in an editorial in 1883 which notes pointedly:

> The center of the Christian system is Jesus Christ, and he must be attacked. In the higher form of opposition to Christianity as shown by continental infidelity a few years ago there was reason to expect that the attack would be directed against the central fact. Of this there is less promise than formerly.[1]

Hott was perceptive enough to rejoice that the attacks of infidels were aimed at the inspiration of the Bible and not at Christ.

The period 1841 to 1890 was one of broadening theological awareness for Evangelicals and United Brethren. They gradually came to agree on the importance of theological study and made arrangements to support it through their opening of theological seminaries, establishing of courses of study for young preachers, providing for publication of a variety of books and pamphlets, holding ministerial institutes, and opening the church papers as forums for theological discussion. A study of these two denominations in this period gives us a story of their entrance into the realm of serious and diligent theological inquiry and their growing awareness of its significance.

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[1] J. W. Hott, "Mistakes of Infidels," RT, September 26, 1883, p. 8. Cf. Editorial, EM, July 8, 1869, p. 212.

VI. TO DEFEND THE FAITH

The discovery of the world of theology had begun. Participation in it, however, seldom went beyond the defense of positions which had come to be regarded as basic to the life of the two churches and hence to be cherished and preserved at all costs. William Warren Sweet's picture of pioneers on the frontier as "non-conformists"[1] hardly applies to Evangelicals and United Brethren, a large part of whose ministry was to frontier farmers. These people were conformists in doctrine. Although they differed bitterly with their Lutheran and Reformed neighbors, their theological position cannot properly be called more "heretical" or "original." They simply preferred the Wesleyan tradition.

The immigrants attracted to these two churches had not occupied positions at the top of the social ladder in the lands from which they had come. For that matter, few immigrants ever do come from the top level of the social structure. If not driven from their homes, they at least envision life in a society open to climbers and likely to reward that progress with appropriate compensation. Social discontent among German immigrants tended to take two forms. One was a radical outburst against the institutions of society produced by disappointment at the failure of the revolutions of 1848 and issuing in emigration to America out of necessity or because it offered one last chance for the realization of their radical dreams. The other was a critique of society motivated by the desire for a

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[1]William W. Sweet, Religion in the Development of American Culture, 1765-1840, p. ix.

quiet life in which the long fingers of a meddlesome government would not interfere--the hope for withdrawal to a life of quietude and anonymity. To people of this temperament Evangelicals and United Brethren appealed.

No doubt the immigration experience itself contributed to conservatism, though it surely did not dictate the form which it took. The Scandinavian immigrant might cherish and cling to the colorful vestments, the learned sermons, the solemn celebration of the sacraments, and the festive but stately music. However, the German immigrant to whom Evangelicals and United Brethren ministered did not bring with him memories of such an ordered and meaningful pattern of church life. He remembered churches which did not occupy such a central position in community life--churches which had tried to make peace with the theologies and philosophies of the universities and had lost much of their influence upon the common man. To such a man the proclamation of a simple Gospel that demanded moral transformation and promised the strength to accomplish the task was a message that could be understood and that offered a firm standing place for the immigrant looking for security in a new homeland.

The experience of Lewis Naumann was typical of many German immigrants who found religious homes in the revivalistic denominations which constituted much of American Protestantism in mid-nineteenth century. Naumann had come to America with his father and brother in 1854, his mother having died on the voyage. Shortly thereafter he went to Wisconsin to visit an aunt whose husband was an Evangelical local preacher. Soundly converted, he testified that he had been filled with "unaussprechlicher Freude" [inexpressible joy]. Soon afterwards he returned home to Ohio to guide the rest of his family to similar experiences before entering the ministry

himself.[1] This spiritual revolution of the entire family had brought a shelter in the time of storm. Here was a beacon to lead the way through the fog of the immigration experience, a pillar of security amid the uncertainties of life in a new land.

Fear of German Rationalism

Because both of these denominations were German in origin they remained deeply interested in the religious situation in Germany. It pained them acutely that their own pietistic patterns of church life and thought did not prevail in their homeland. Frequently they expressed their sorrow at what they regarded as the degeneracy of church life and the impious theologies which circulated in Germany.[2]

This reaction to German Christianity led them to establish missions abroad. In 1850-51 the Evangelicals began their work in Hesse-Darmstadt and Württemberg, and in 1869 United Brethren went to Bavaria.[3] Soon reports were recounting struggles between the missionaries and state

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[1]Leedy, p. 775.

[2]See EM, March 22, 1849, pp. 22-23; another article deplored the "awful state of things in Germany," and reported on the progress of atheism and "infidel sentiments" (EM, April 23, 1849, pp. 30-31); "Tholuck's Views on the State of the Church in Germany," EM, August 8, 1850, p. 59; J. Degmeier, "Religion in Germany--Sham Reforms," RT, April 21, 1858, p. 130; "Religion in Germany," RT, January 31, 1866, p. 85, attributes widespread infidelity in Germany to the prevailing Lutheran doctrine of "baptismal regeneration." For an account of religious conditions in Germany see Albright, pp. 414-425; he includes opinions both of Germans and Americans regarding the state of the Christian church in Germany. Paul Douglass describes the conditions which allegedly justified the establishment of a Methodist mission in Germany in his The Story of German Methodism (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1939), p. 103. See Carl Wittke's portrayal of William Nast's attitude towards German rationalism (William Nast, pp. 9-10, 155, passim).

[3]United Brethren turned over their work to the Methodists in 1905 (Drury, History, p. 602).

authorities.[1] With the bitter denunciation that "infidelity is the natural and monstrous child, born from an unholy union between Church and State," Editor Clewell of the Messenger expressed the sanguine hope that the new mission in Germany would result in "a brilliant success before many years are passed," since perhaps "in the Providence of God, one object in His raising up the Evangelical Association is to Reform Germany."[2]

The missions in Germany gave further reason to continue close surveilance of the German religious situation. In 1870 the editor of the Telescope reported that only about three per cent of all German people capable of attending worship did so. According to his cource of information, between three and thirty per cent partook of "divine communion," and only about twenty per cent of adults received a "churchly burial."[3] Jacob Kaechele, a presiding elder who had gone to Germany from Canada, reported to the General Conference of the Evangelical Association in 1879, justifying the expansion of the work in Germany in these words:

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[1]For example, see EM, February 9, 1860, p. 21.

[2]T. G. Clewell, "A Conference in Germany," EM, February 4, 1863, p. 44. In an editorial designed to elicit support for the new mission established in Alsace in 1868-69, Clewell insisted that there was no country "in which the revival of evangelical piety is more needed than in Germany that has been so blighted by a dead formalism, which gave rise to a skeptical rationalism, and has now paralyzed the German heart by its cold and forbidding neology, which sweeps away all that is dear to our religious nature, and leaves nothing in its stead but blank doubt and negation" (EM, February 18, 1869, p. 52).

[3]RT, June 22, 1870, p. 332. See S. A. Mowrers' report on a lecture by the Rev. Mr. Von Schleumbach, a member of the Baltimore German Methodist Episcopal Conference, on the subject of his late European tour. Calling attention to the low state of German religious life, Von Schleumbach attributed it to the rationalistic teaching in German universities. This was at its peak about fifty years previous, but it had borne its fruit in the preachers and teachers who were corrupted by its influence at that time, according to Von Schleumbach ("Germany," RT, October 13, 1875, p. 17).

> The National Church in Thueringen is in a deplorable condition. The poor people have not only mostly rationalistic ministers, but the congregations are poorly supplied. There are places there in which from four to eight hundred persons live, who have a sermon only every three weeks.[1]

United Brethren reports agreed with this picture of religious life in Germany.[2] D. K. Flickinger, missionary bishop for the quadrennium 1885-89, declared that the need for missionaries was acute because of the "coldness of the state church" and its lack of "spirituality."[3] Evangelicals and United Brethren reacted to these reports not only with sorrow and regret, but with real fear, for they saw this current of skepticism and liberalism spreading westward.[4]

In this degenerate situation they clutched eagerly at every crumb of encouragement. They discovered some change for the better as early as 1851, when at a conference of Evangelical ministers of Germany a pietistic minority was able to enlist the support of Ullmann of Heidelberg, Schmidt of Tübingen, Ebrard of Erlangen, Dorner of Bonn, Veler of Breslau, Hengstenberg of Berlin, and Julius Müller of Halle.[5] There was qualified optimism in this report in 1860:

> The great battle between light and darkness is still going on in Germany, and though the ground is often shifting, still there is no relaxation of the old quarrel between the seed of the woman and the seed of

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[1] General Conference Journal of the Evangelical Association (Cleveland, Ohio: Publishing House of The Evangelical Association, 1879), p. 62. Hereafter cited as GCJEA.

[2] "Our German Mission," RT, February 15, 1882, pp. 322-323.

[3] D. K. Flickinger, "Germany Again," RT, February 8, 1888.

[4] The Rev. John G. Miller even tried to link the despicable Universalism with German rationalism, not in origin, but in spirit and inspiration (Day Book of Reverend John G. Miller, 1846 and 1847, trans. J. G. Eller [Naperville, Illinois, 1955], p. 42).

[5] "Religious Changes in Germany," RT, January 15, 1851, p. 77.

> the serpent. When the poisonous fangs of Rationalism had been extracted, hopes were entertained that the Gospel would now progress undisturbed; but the old serpent having something of the lizard nature can develop new heads at pleasure, each one as dangerous as that which has been already crushed. The universities have ceased to pour their swarms of rationalistic philosophers into the pulpits. The schoolmasters, perhaps, as a body, are a generation behind, and distil into the youthful mind what the last generation heard taught from the pulpit. The old residue of Rationalism lies about the benches of the schools and gymnasia like snow about the hedges in the month of March, but the younger clergy are, in general, completely free from its baneful influence.[1]

Near the end of his life Dr. Anton Huelster, who by now was a German Congregationalist in the Midwest and editor of Der Kirchenbote, the church periodical, recalls his experiences as a student in Germany in the 1860's. Almost invariably, he remembers, the rationalistically inclined ministers and professors drew poor crowds to their sermons and lectures, whereas faithful men like Kapf and Gerok preached to full churches.[2] The Rev. John Hurst's report in 1867 to the Christian Advocate (borrowed by the Telescope) confirms Huelster's report:

> The piety in the German universities is far greater than it was twenty or thirty years ago. In the two English universities of Oxford and Cambridge there is as much rationalism as in all the German universities together. There is hardly one university in Germany where there are not faithful professors, in fact there are a number of universities in which nearly every chair is occupied by an evangelical theologian. Thus it comes, that in all the young clergy of Wurtemburg there is a large number of believing pastors who preach the gospel faithfully, and have their churches full to overflowing, while those who cling to rationalistic views have no hearers. In the lower order of society, simple peasants and artisans meet during the week and read and explain the Scriptures as those in olden time in Berea. These little meetings

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[1]"Germany," RT, February 22, 1860, p. 97.

[2]Huelster identifies the "good guys" as Beck of Tübingen; Christlieb and Lange of Bonn; Dorner at Berlin; and Kahnis, Delitzsch, and Luthardt at Leipzig. The "bad guys" were Weiszäcker and Landerer of Tübingen; Kamphausen of Bonn; Vatke at Berlin; and a minister, Jatho, of Köln (Anton Huelster, "Erinnerungen aus unserm Studenten-leben," Der Kirchenbote, September 5, 1912). Cf. the Rev. W. A. Bartlett's account of his student days under Tholuck, who "was then the theological Washington, foremost in the war against rationalism;" Bartlett had matriculated at the University of Halle in 1857 (RT, January 30, 1867, p. 161).

> are called "communions," since they speak to each other of their spiritual experience. They are regarded as the salt of the earth, and they have a kind of discipline which expels those who do not live according to the Word of God, though every one is welcome to their meetings.[1]

But celebrations of victory were premature, according to the Rev. E. S. Lorenz, 1883 graduate of Yale Divinity School who had done graduate study abroad. He is convinced that "the present enthusiasm over recent German orthodoxy, due in its popular diffusion largely to Joseph Cook, is as uncritical and inflated as the former fears of German rationalism were unreasonable and exaggerated." Lorenz admits that the movement from rationalism to orthodoxy that has been going on over the previous half-century "is really one of the most remarkable phenomena in the history of theology." However, he thinks that in the general rejoicing the fact has been obscured that the motives have been philosophical, not religious, and that the orthodox are not at all friendly to pietistic dissenting bodies. It is an orthodoxy of the letter, not of the Spirit. For instance,

> Prof. Luthardt, eulogized by Joseph Cook as a champion of the faith, is noted in Leipsic for his aversion to all dissenting churches and for his energy in rooting out any attempts to establish one in his city. The Evangelical Association managed to get permission to start a Sunday-school, and prospered greatly; but the ecclesiastical Ahabs coveted their little vineyard, and a police-order was issued which broke up the school.[2]

To expect much support from most of Lutheran orthodoxy is futile, argued Lorenz. The German Reformed wing of the Prussian Union is more warm-hearted, and with them "lies the religious future of Germany." However, he admits that this group to which belong Christlieb and Stoecker, is less influential. Furthermore, what has been applauded as orthodoxy would hardly

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[1]John Hurst, "Growth of Piety in Germany," RT, March 6, 1867, p. 203. Also see Editorial, RT, March 6, 1867, p. 204; S. A. Mowers, "Germany," RT, October 13, 1875, p. 17.

[2]E. S. Lorenz, "Recent German Orthodoxy," RT, January 7, 1885, p. 17.

be called that in America, for not only do men like Kahnis, Luthardt, and Delitzsch abhor evangelistic work such as is carried on by Moody and the Methodists, but they make "little of Christ, subordinating him to the Father not only during his incarnation, but previously."[1] In addition, their treatment of Scripture is rather high-handed. The Song of Solomon is just "a marriage-ode," and it is held that the book of Daniel was written in the time of the Maccabees. Delitzsch, while more conservative than the "critics of the radical destructive school," has nonetheless "recently made many dangerous concessions."[2] Hence, one has to look at German orthodoxy with mixed feelings; an unrestrained enthusiasm over the death of rationalism would be premature.

The Infidel

In their formative years both Evangelicals and United Brethren had established the pattern of engaging in theological activity primarily for the purpose of defending the faith against heresy and atheism. The reasons were many and varied: the commitment to instantaneous conversionism, assurance, and Christian perfection; the need to preserve the unity and develop the denominational consciousness of these new bodies; the static understanding of language and belief in the propositional nature of Christian doctrine; and the presence of formidable threats to these commitments, needs and beliefs. This pattern received reinforcement in the middle period, particularly in the face of German infidelity which spilled out over the American continent. Barbara Cross has interpreted Horace Bushnell's theology as

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[1] Lorenz, "Recent German Orthodoxy," RT, January 7, 1885, p. 17.

[2] Ibid.

"poetry suited to the finest minds, the instrument of eloquence."[1] Evangelicals and United Brethren could not have allowed themselves the luxury of such theology even if they had been capable of producing it, for they found themselves--especially the Evangelicals--locked in combat with forces which threatened to all but extinguish them.

Admittedly, this interpretation is open to challenge. One analyst is convinced that the infidel was a straw man:

> The churches made "infidel" to mean so many things in order to advance their own purposes. In a few instances they panicked when challenged, but ordinarily they moved with the calm complacency that goes with the knowledge of a battle's victorious outcome before it is fought. This self-confidence permitted them to use the image of the infidel. As the instrument of the churches' aggrandizement, the infidel is moved downstage from his place in what has been called a "minor but belligerent tradition" to a place of prominence in American religious life. That minority status of the freethought tradition arose from its own character. Lacking genius or profundity, misunderstanding the American temper, doctrinaire, negative, extremely individualistic as its proponents often were, they found union and organization difficult. Left to itself, the whole movement would perhaps have withered away.[2]

Could it be that the "calm complacency" was due to a sturdy belief in the ultimate victory of God, rather than an obvious conclusion derived from denominational statistics and from observation of the American scene? The "calm complacency" may not be an accurate index of the battle situation, at least from the mundane point of view. To Evangelicals and United Brethren infidelity did not appear to be withering away. Far less secure than the large, established denominations, they were still fighting for their lives. The deluge of German immigration in the thirties, forties, and fifties, while providing the possibilities for almost unlimited growth for these churches, at the same time carried with it enough leaders with threatening

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[1]Cross, p. 91.

[2]Martin E. Marty, The Infidel, Freethought and American Religion (Cleveland, Ohio, and New York: Meridian Books, The World Publishing Company, 1961), p. 12.

atheistic ideas and sufficient intellectual acumen to cancel out this huge group as a potential source for church growth by leading them into atheistic associations or liberal religious groups. Here was a tremendous threat, especially to the Evangelicals, who remained the more German of the two denominations.

Were there really enough live infidels in the country to warrant such wholesale obliteration bombing as Evangelicals and United Brethren conducted?[1] When Bishop Seybert journeyed to New York City in 1842 to found a mission, he reported that many of the German people there were "given to rationalism, deism, and universalism."[2] On another of his journeys he met a group of Germans north of Galena, Illinois, who worked in the lead and copper mines there; he noted that they were "unconcerned and wicked,"

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[1]William W. Orwig, associated with the publishing ventures of the Evangelical Association as editor and/or publisher for much of the period from 1836-69, was one person responsible for conducting the assault (Mattill, Jr., Part II, p. 8; Part VIII, chap. v, pp. 2-3); according to S. P. Spreng, Orwig "watched the ark of our faith with a jealous eye" (EM, June 4, 1889, p. 360). Orwig agreed wholeheartedly with the Western Christian Advocate that the duty of the preacher is to "exercise a censorship over the literature of the age; holding up to scorn the traducers of truth and piety, exposing its perversion of facts, its sophisms and mistakes" (EM, March 1, 1854, p. 34). Throughout 1854 Fisher gave the infidel an abundance of attention in the pages of the Evangelical Messenger. Editors Clewell and Spreng also took the infidel very seriously ("Christianity a Miracle," EM, March 8, 1865, p. 76; "Why are there not More Candidates for the Ministry?" EM, December 13, 1865, p. 394). Spreng's address to the General Conference of the United Brethren in 1885 shows the concern with the infidel which he took with him into the editorship two years later (GCJUB, 1885, p. 170). Spreng was editor from 1887 until 1907, when he was elected bishop.

See the report of H. A. Thompson, secretary for the United Brethren Board of Education, to the 1881 General Conference (GCJUB, 1881, p. 114). Cf. H. L. Poling's comments in RT, September 21, 1870, p. 18, on the need to engage in theological controversy in order to refute the doctrine of infidels such as Paine and Hume. As late as 1887 Dr. J. P. Landis of Union Biblical Seminary "delivered a masterly address on 'The Foes of Christianity,' in which he pointed out the different theories of philosophers and scientists in opposition to the teaching of the Christian system" (RT, September 14, 1887, p. 585).

[2]Seybert, XII (December 27, 1842), 75.

denying "the divinity of Jesus Christ."[1] What made German radicalism so explosive was the factor of the German press, which Editor Henry Fisher bitterly censured:

> But a considerable part lose no occasion to express their contempt of the gospel and its ministers. And some of them are as blasphemous and indecent in their railings against every thing sacred, as were the pamphleteers of the French Revolution. We have before us journals filled with atheism, opposing the marriage institution, and boldly avowing that their object is anarchy and unrestrained indulgence. We will not pollute our columns with translations of these infamous ravings. This allusion must suffice.[2]

In 1854 the Messenger alerted Evangelicals to the presence and activities of recent German immigrants in the northern and western states who were attempting to subvert public morals by trying to ban the Bible from the public schools and to abolish the Sabbath, by discontinuing prayers in Congress and state legislatures, and by opposing any legislation on the temperance question. Apprehensively Fisher warned that

> it is highly important that the friends of Bible-Christianity, should keep a vigilant eye upon the infidel and Bible hating movements of these enemies of our country's dearest rights. Many of them are persevering, determined infidels, who denounce the Bible, Sabbath and Christian ministry, in the most unmeasured terms; and who, under the plea of liberty, urge and recommend the most revolting and abominable measures which, if carried out, would result in the overthrow of every vestige of liberty and order, and reduce the country to a state of utter confusion and anarchy.[3]

Reminding his readers that it is their duty to labor for the evangelization of these people, Fisher prays that God may bless "our German preachers with more apostolical fortitude and aptness; and may they go on in the name of Jesus, marching in unbroken phalanx against the formidable and corrupting

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[1]Seybert, XIII (July 16, 1844), 37. That Seybert took seriously a ministry to German immigrants is evident by the record that the mission at Ann Arbor, Michigan, was aimed at attracting a settlement of 1500 Germans who were mostly immigrants (Watson, p. 12).

[2]Henry Fisher, Editorial, EM, March 22, 1851, p. 23.

[3]Henry Fisher, Editorial, EM, June 7, 1854, p. 84.

tendencies which are daily becoming more threatening, among the German people in our country!"[1]

The efforts to make inroads on German infidelity did not result in immediate success. The good relation which T. G. Clewell had with his Jewish neighbor who sold him tea, coffee, and sugar led him to think that Jews might be "far more promising material for missionary labor than our German Rationalists, Atheists, Indifferentists or lager-beer subjects."[2] Frederick Krecker attributed the meager results of his own work in Philadelphia to

> the many public drinking houses, theatres, &c., to which the Germans swarm like bees to their hives, with their wives and children. Persons at a distance can hardly imagine to what an extent drinking and dancing is carried on in this city; and the Americans of the lower classes are not in the least behind them. The Germans have also many beneficial societies among them, in which too often Rationalism has the sway. Although there are about 80,000 Germans in this city, there is only sitting room in all the German Churches for about 15,000 at most. Truly here is a great field of operation for our Evangelical Association.[3]

During the 1867 session of the Evangelicals General Conference occurred a debate on the question of enlarging the periodicals. One of the delegates, H. Huelster from Wisconsin, regarded the pressure from German infidelity as a justifiable reason for favoring the move:

> I should not have risen to say anything on this subject if an important point had not remained untouched. A want that is specially felt, in reference to our papers, is the enlargement and increase of the department devoted to general and secular intelligence. This want is generally acknowledged, and in the West, with the wants and desires of which

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[1] Ibid. See "Thomas Paineism," EM, May 30, 1855, p. 87.

[2] T. G. Clewell, "The Jew in Our Sanctum," EM, March 3, 1859, p. 37.

[3] EM, December 22, 1859, p. 205. Cf. Albert Faust's description of the "large number of intellectual Germans who do not adhere to the creed of any church for their moral guidance" in The German Element in the United States (New York: The Steuben Society of America, 1927), II, 428. Cf. T. G. Clewell's important editorials in the Evangelical Messenger in 1860, supra, pp. 86-88.

> I am intimately acquainted, it is a deeply felt want. The German secular press of Wisconsin, and no less in Illinois, is in the hands of the most rabid infidels, and these journals are in all our families a vile poison and real pest; and yet our most intelligent members, who love to read and learn, and desire to keep informed concerning the most important current events transpiring at home or abroad, are obliged to patronize these papers, and pay well for them, or do without information of the kind desired. If we furnish the desired information, however, we shall be able, not only to crowd out from our families, most of these vile and poisonous political sheets, but we shall also be able to secure a very respectable circulation for our papers outside of our Church.[1]

At the same Conference this resolution on the state of the country was adopted unanimously without debate:

> Resolved, That we deplore that a disposition is manifested here and there to sacrifice moral principles to those infidels who want to have our wholesome Sunday laws, and the legislative acts of several States respecting the cause of temperance abolished forthwith. No compromise in order to secure political power and a false peace ought to be made with these pioneers of social and civil dissolution, but we ought to stand immovably upon these noble institutions, even if we should suffer temporary political defeat.[2]

Even more disturbing was the threat to the Scriptures posed by rationalists and infidels. Their complete disregard for the Bible meant that they disagreed with the most basic convictions of these denominations. One could debate with a Calvinist, assured that he too would be drawing his arguments from Scripture, but how could one battle a foe with whom one could not even agree on the ground rules?[3]

So afraid of infidelity were these churchmen that they came to apply the name indiscriminately to a variety of foes. The term "infidel" became a useful epithet because of its rich suggestiveness. For instance, when a United Brethren minister pointed out the heresy of one of his brethren who

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[1] GCJEA, 1867, p. 57.

[2] Ibid., p. 85. Cf. Reuben Yeakel, "The Irrepressible Conflict," EM, August 10, 1871, p. 252. See EM, January 8, 1880, p. 4; EM, November 28, 1882, p. 381.

[3] See EM, February 22, 1850, p. 14.

did not think that a belief in the miraculous conception and pre-existence of Christ and the resurrection of the human body was essential to salvation, he added considerable force to the accusation by calling his opponent's words the "language of an infidel."[1] O. B. Frothingham, the Unitarian and later the first president of the Free Religious Association, was written off as an infidel.[2] During the Civil War Editor Clewell of the Messenger, who was a loyal Lincoln supporter, used the term to damn the Copperheads when he discovered atheistic tendencies among them.[3]

Deism, the progenitor of various forms of infidelity, had a notable domestic history all the way back to the Revolutionary period. Never strong after the turn of the century, it continued to serve as an object lesson for those who might be wavering in their religious allegiance. For years it provided readable copy for the church periodicals.[4]

Their acquaintance with deism enabled churchmen to identify its alleged descendants. William Lloyd Garrison's infidelity was condemned, despite the sentiments of Editor John Lawrence in favor of the anti-slavery movement.[5] The famed Colonel Robert Ingersoll came in for his share of

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[1]"Bible Doctrine of Jesus Christ," RT, June 22, 1842, p. 185.

[2]"The Only Infidelity," RT, November 18, 1863, p. 45. See Smith, Handy, Loetscher, II, 223-25. If it were possible, Frothingham's reputation was damaged even further when it was reported that he had introduced Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise at the occasion of one of Wise's lectures ("A New Attack on Jesus," EM, June 8, 1871, p. 177.

[3]T. G. Clewell, "Atheistic Tendencies," EM, August 19, 1863, p. 268.

[4]"The End of Some Infidel 'Liberals,'" EM, March 16, 1853, p. 46, describes the dispersion and inglorious ends of the famous Newburgh coterie. Also see "Conversation between a Deist and a Christian," EM, November 24, 1852, pp. 184-86. One article comparing the relative moral effects of deism and Christianity on people appeared at least three times in the Telescope and the Messenger (RT, January 30, 1856, p. 84; RT, June 18, 1856, p. 162; EM, July 23, 1856, p. 116.

[5]John Lawrence, Editorial, RT, August 10, 1853, p. 198.

denunciation, especially from 1877 through 1881.[1] The Mercersburg Theology barely escapes the epithet of infidel,[2] and spiritualism is unblinkingly labelled as just a "new form of infidelity."[3]

Various shades of "liberalism" also acquired the title, particularly the English heresies of the sixties that showed their heads in Essays and Reviews[4] and Bishop Colenso's "foolish effusion on the Pentateuch."[5]

The church papers also provided progress reports on the doctrinal perversions of the Beechers, who were first cousins of the infidel. Noting the soundness of Lyman Beecher's theology, the author of one article marvels at the deviant patterns of the children, who "with all their reputed brains, are about as wild a batch of religious thinkers as can be found anywhere."[6] Edward's heresy regarding the pre-existence of all human souls is mentioned, Catherine's views are denounced as "about as infidel as Paine's Age of Reason," and Henry Ward's sermons are called a "strange jumble of truth and error, wisdom and folly," some of them having "the grace and unction of the old Puritan divines, while others are permeated by

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[1]"Infidelity on the Platform," EM, February 22, 1877, p. 60; "Robert Ingersoll's Folly," EM, May 3, 1877, p. 137; "Ingersoll and His Blasphemies," EM, January 2, 1879, pp. 4-5; and the excerpt of Jeremiah S. Black's rebuttal to Ingersoll in RT, July 27, 1881, p. 696.

[2]"German Puseyism," EM, August 6, 1856, p. 128.

[3]"Spiritualism but a New Form of Infidelity," EM, November 10, 1859, p. 179.

[4]T. G. Clewell, Editorial, EM, January 15, 1863, p. 20. This important symposium admitted that the Mosaic account of creation was incapable of harmonization with geology, that the Old Testament was of composite character, and held that Scripture was to be interpreted like any other book.

[5]RT, July 22, 1863, p. 186. The Telescope kept its readers up to date on this English heresy ("Rival Heresies in England," RT, July 5, 1865, p. 180; see the editor's comments on an article by Hengstenberg, "Moses and Colenso," in the Theological Eclectic [RT, August 10, 1864, p. 198]; also see RT, September 12, 1866, p. 9).

[6]"The Young Beechers," RT, July 31, 1861, p. 190.

the infidel philosophy of New England Unitarianism."[1]

In the Evangelical Association the rising young warrior against infidelity, the Rev. S. P. Spreng, learned to wield his sword by combatting Beecherite heresy. Charging that the famous preacher had become very acceptable to infidels, Spreng clearly reveals in one of his attacks on Henry Ward Beecher the attitude of Evangelicals toward Christian doctrine:

> The favorite dictum of modern apostles of progress in theology that truth must change and adapt itself to the advance of the world, is, in fact, a fallacy. The Word of God, which is the only authoritative form of truth, is adapted to all the possible advancements in society. If truth be changed it is no longer truth. A revered apostle thought it necessary that himself and his successors should "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." The old faith is the safest, the best. It saved the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles, the martyrs, the reformers, and why will it not do for us? Human nature has not changed, therefore saving truth must not change, lest it have no longer saving power.[2]

Beecher's judgment may have been right about some denominations--that "only old deacons could remember when the old doctrines were preached to the confusion of heretics and the destruction of infidels."[3] His remarks did not apply to Evangelicals and United Brethren, to whom such doctrinal assaults on the infidel were their bread and butter.

Miscellaneous Means of Defense

To supply an armory of weapons for defense against the infidel required ingenuity, since the simple resort to Scripture was not effective.

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[1] Ibid. See the warning remarks which preface an expository article by Henry Ward Beecher in RT, August 21, 1861, p. 201. J. W. Etter reports Beecher's announcement that he does not believe in eternal punishment (RT, February 13, 1878, p. 161). When Beecher retired, J. W. Hott noted that his farewell sermons gave evidence "that he does not believe in the inspiration of the Scriptures, nor in the future everlasting punishment of the wicked" (Editorial, RT, August 30, 1882, p. 777).

[2] S. P. Spreng, "The Latest Edition of Beecherism," EM, August 1, 1882, p. 241.

[3] Marty, p. 144.

Bible bullets fell harmlessly upon the infidel, for he could laugh them off. One method was to resurrect the lurid descriptions of the death-beds of infidels which had been used in the early period of the church.[1] Another tactic became available through the growing trust in reason. According to Editor Clewell, God has given us various faculties and means for satisfying them, among them moral ones--"but, says the Bible-denying infidel, nothing to gratify them!" And you call this reasonable? "Is that at last the grand outcome of all this pompous infidel philosophy?"[2]

The arguments from the well-known opponents of infidelity were another source of help. One champion was the Rev. T. DeWitt Talmage;[3] another was Joseph Cook, lecturer at Boston's Tremont Temple for over twenty years, who provided a whole arsenal of arguments.[4] When Cook's lectures were printed in the Telescope, his fellow defenders against infidelity were exhorted to assemble at his feet:

> And now let us gather ourselves into a great congregation of one hundred and fifty thousand or more, stretching across the land, and hear. Let us see the strongholds of infidelity swept away as leaves, and the mighty pillars of the Christian structure towering up to the heavens. Into the grave of Ingersoll will he pile the relics of infidel catacombs resurrected by modern skeptics, and once more consign them to darkness. How inspiring, how invigorating, and how like giants filled with new wine will we feel after having drunken at this feast. We need it. Let the thunders of Sinai peel forth until the ends of the

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[1]See "The Lesson of Death-Beds," EM, July 7, 1852, p. 106; "Voltaire's Death," EM, August 30, 1854, p. 136; "Remorse of Dying Infidels," EM, January 25, 1865, p. 26; EM, June 26, 1879, p. 4; RT, July 31, 1844, p. 3; RT, May 30, 1855, p. 150; and "How a Universalist Died," RT, January 1, 1862, p. 69.

[2]T. G. Clewell, "Have We a Word of God?" EM, August 24, 1864, p. 268. See Anton Huelster's "The Stupidity of Infidelity," EM, April 11, 1882, p. 113. S. W. Koontz regarded reason as "of invaluable worth" in fighting off the enemies of Christianity ("Laws and Force of Reason," RT, November 22, 1876, p. 66).

[3]See his sermon on "Evolution and Infidelity," EM, February 6, 1883, pp. 41-42.

[4]Cf. the Rev. A. M. Snyder's "Modern Infidelity," RT, June 10, 1885, p. 370.

> earth shall speak. Let him martial the hosts of earth and sky--the visible and invisible forces of nature and art--and put to flight the armies of Magog. Kingdoms and empires will not escape his notice. Men and institutions must stand or fall as tried in the crucible of truth. Flesh and spirit, material and immaterial, will alike yield to his dissecting-knife. Civil liberty and religious bondage will be magnified and execrated as truth or justice may demand.
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> . . . Woe be unto the United Brethren that shall deny themselves and families this feast of Christian thought.[1]

The common enemy of infidelity served as an effective catalyst for Protestant efforts at union and cooperation. In 1855 union of Evangelicals with Wesleyan Methodists and United Brethren gained support from some who thought it would result in greater strength to oppose their mutual enemies of Catholicism and infidelity.[2] Meetings of the Evangelical Alliance also provided rich resources.[3] At the meeting in 1873 a paper was read on "Armor Against Modern Infidelity" by Dr. Theodor Christlieb, professor of theology at Bonn. The Telescope printed selections from his paper in order that readers might receive advice on how to combat effectively "Unchristian Philosophy, Destructive Historical Criticism, Anti-miraculous Natural Science."[4] Both Evangelicals and United Brethren accepted invitations to attend the Methodist Ecumenical Conference in 1881. One of the topics to be considered was "Perils from the Papacy, from infidelity, and from the desecration of the Sabbath."[5] Fraternal addresses back and forth to each other's General Conferences by Evangelicals and United Brethren

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[1] E. H. Caylor, "Joseph Cook?" RT, October 29, 1879, p. 1.

[2] EM, February 7, 1855, p. 19. Cf. RT, February 14, 1855, p. 90; T. G. Clewell, Editorial, EM, June 28, 1865, p. 204.

[3] The Evangelical Alliance was a loosely-organized cooperative movement begun in 1846 by evangelical churches in Europe and America.

[4] RT, October 29, 1873, p. 33.

[5] GCJEA, 1879, p. 31. See also the October, 1881, issues of the Religious Telescope.

also struck this note.[1]

Another strategy was to give ample publicity to all triumphs over the enemy.[2] In doing so, the apologists of orthodoxy could go beyond reminiscence, for infidelity was down and all but out by the end of the century. On the occasion of his graduation from Otterbein University C. E. Bonebrake reported in his speech on "The Reign of Doubt" that infidelity was "fast losing influence over the intelligent and thoughtful masses of our people."[3] In his fraternal address to the United Brethren General Conference in 1889 the Rev. S. C. Breyfogel of the Evangelical Association sounded almost over-confident of the victory which was within reach:

> Standing upon the triangular field of a sound Biblical interpretation, bounded by the three great departments of doctrine known as Theology, Christology and Soteriology, we believe ourselves to be invulnerable against every attack of modern skepticism, and our conviction amounts to a certainty that upon this field the combined allies of anti-Christ will be overthrown and put to rout. We believe that around these truths, which we implicitly accept and uncompromisingly declare, the human race will yet gather in reverent and submissive faith, and, bowing at the feet of our Lord, exclaim, "Thou hast well said."[4]

The Enemy Within

Not only was theology enlisted in the battle against the infidelity outside the church, but it served to protect the cardinal doctrines of the faith against error inside the church. During a time when Christian

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[1] See, for example, the Rev. S. P. Spreng's address to the United Brethren General Conference in 1885 (GCJUB, 1885, pp. 169-172).

[2] "The Infidel Outwitted," EM, January 18, 1854, p. 12; "The Atheist Silenced," EM, September 3, 1856, pp. 143-44; "The Atheist Silenced," RT, March 13, 1861, p. 109; an account of the conversion of an infidel, taken from C. M. Saxon's recently published book, The Young Infidel, is carried in EM, May 27, 1858, p. 82; "How the Atheist Became a Believer," RT, February 29, 1860, p. 101.

[3] RT, June 21, 1882, p. 616.

[4] S. C. Breyfogel, "Address," EM, June 11, 1889, p. 377.

doctrine receded into insignificance for many American Protestants, purity of doctrine remained a prime concern for most Evangelicals and United Brethren. Of the leaders of the church one of the highest tributes their biographers could pay to them was that they were "thoroughly orthodox" in doctrine.[1] S. P. Spreng gave voice to the convictions of his fellow Evangelicals when he explained the reasons underlying this concern for purity of doctrine:

> It is the object of Christian doctrine to express in unmistakable language the goodness and mercy of God, as manifested in creation and in the scheme of redemption, and man's duties and privileges arising from these considerations. Doctrine, consequently, sustains a vital relation to Christian experience; it is the seed from which spring the Christian graces, the fuel which, set on fire by the Holy Ghost, produces the motive power of a holy life.[2]

Various spokesmen were not at all hesitant about naming what they regarded as the essential doctrines of the church. Their informal pronouncements laid much greater stress on instantaneous conversion than did the Articles of Faith in the discipline.[3] Just what one's duty is in

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[1]H. A. Thompson, Biography of Jonathan Weaver (Dayton, Ohio: United Brethren Publishing House, 1901), p. xv; Yeakel, Long, p. 245; John, Kephart, p. 186.

[2]S. P. Spreng, "Doctrine the Basis of Experience," EM, July 2, 1889, p. 424. Editor Henry Fisher had asserted in 1850 that "the edification of the Church and the salvation of sinners are chiefly dependent on the purity of doctrine" (EM, November 8, 1850, p. 83). William Orwig noted in one of his sermons that "both the Old and the New Testaments put great value on correctness of doctrine and warn frequently against deviation from it" (Zweiundfünfzig Predigten über Christliche Lehre und Erfahrung [Cleveland, Ohio: Gedruckt für den Verfass im Verlagshaus der Evangelische Gemeinschaft, 1882], p. 11). Cf. "The War on Creeds," RT, January 30, 1856, p. 81.

[3]"Dangers and Advantages of Reading," EM, April 9, 1849, p. 26; S.C. Breyfogel's address to the 1889 General Conference of the United Brethren (EM, June 11, 1889, p. 377). Also see the report of George M. Mathews' address on "The Coming Christian Thinker" on the occasion of his graduation from Union Biblical Seminary (RT, May 10, 1882, p. 520); Mathews later became a bishop. Cf. Joseph Cook's lecture which enunciates five principles by which all theologies could be tested for their orthodoxy; the first of these is that "it must effect deliverance of individuals and of communities from the love of sin and the guilt of sin" ("Do We Need a New Theology?" RT, February 20, 1884, pp. 347-48.

reference to these essential doctrines is made clear by Bishop Esher's address to his own General Conference in 1875. He says it is not the business of the Conference

> to lay down doctrines, rules of faith and practice for the communicants of the kingdom of God, or to establish new dogmas; this was done long since. God himself has given us the doctrines, the rules of faith and practice to secure happiness, and others long before us developed all needful doctrine into dogma. It remains for us simply to hold fast to the actually existing laws and ordinances of the kingdom of God.[1]

In setting forth the duties of the Conference Esher was in harmony with the tradition of the Evangelical Association regarding the duties of ministers. John Dreisbach, the Evangelicals' patriarch, had clearly stated that the task of the minister included the refutation of heresy:

> He should be well acquainted with the truths and errors of ancient and modern times. He should be able to defend the one, and to refute the other in all its various shapes and developments. Present heresies, and errors which are now exerting their destructive influence upon society, should be well studied, manfully met and refuted. Thus, while progressing in his own course, he will keep a watchful eye upon the progress of the enemies of Christ, which by the power of God, he will eventually conquer.[2]

The District Meetings or Institutes for ministers begun in the late 1850's were designed expressly for this purpose--discussing and explaining theological differences and correcting errors which might have crept in.[3] Numerous articles in the church press also treated crucial doctrines to be affirmed and defended.[4]

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[1] GCJEA, 1875, p. 4.

[2] John Dreisbach, "The Principle of Success, No. III. Ministerial," EM, September 16, 1857, pp. 148-49. See T. G. Clewell's commendation of Bishop Seybert for fulfilling his duty of combatting error (EM, January 26, 1860, pp. 12-13).

[3] Supra, pp. 97-98.

[4] See, for example, P. G. Saltsman, "Is Jesus Christ Verily and Truly God?" RT, January 25, 1860, p. 81; P. Shepherd, "Thoughts on the Trinity," RT, December 21, 1859, p. 61; L. W. Matthews, "Divinity of Christ," RT, October 10, 1860, p. 21; "Divinity of Jesus Christ," RT, May 15, 1861,

One after another foe within the Christian church drew the fire of Evangelicals and United Brethren. The Mercersburg theologians especially excited the Evangelicals because the first editor of the Messenger, Nicholas Gehr, went over to the enemy and joined the Mercersburg Classis of the Reformed Church.[1] The Campbellites were an omnipresent foe for United Brethren, who criticized their lack of Biblical knowledge, asserting that next to the Mormons, they had the least of all.[2] A revival report tells of success despite having to fight the Campbellites, two of whom were numbered among the twenty converts.[3]

By the seventies and eighties, however, a much larger problem was rising on the horizon--the variety of liberal tendencies which opponents called the "New Theology." Editor H. B. Hartzler of the Messenger, soon to be removed for insubordination, fostered the attack.[4] The Rev. D. B. Byers, a leading minister of the Illinois Conference who wrote a series of articles for Hartzler, identified the ablest American advocates of the "New Theology" as Dr. T. T. Munger, Dr. Newman Smyth, Professor A. V. G. Allen, and President Bascom. He is a good enough student of theology to recognize the

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p. 145. The Rev. P. H. Davis, in support of the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, appeals to nature and to the needs of the human soul, which "craves a more intimate relation with God than would be possible if that God had not manifested himself in the flesh; not a sovereign of the skies, but a loving, beating, friendly bosom in Bethany" ("Christ Divine," RT, February 17, 1869, p. 185). See also J. W. Hott's editorial on "Practical Tendency of Christianity in our Times," RT, February 6, 1889, p. 81; and the address of the Rev. Dr. deVeuve, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Dayton, Ohio, delivered at the opening of the fall term of Union Biblical Seminary (RT, September 11, 1889, p. 584).

[1]See an article taken from the Lutheran Observer (EM, July 9, 1849, p. 51); EM, July 23, 1849, p. 54; EM, August 22, 1849, p. 62. Cf. United Brethren polemics against the Mercersburg threat (RT, February 20, 1856, p. 92); RT, April 30, 1856, p. 132; RT, June 17, 1863, p. 165).

[2]RT, April 11, 1860, p. 126. [3]RT, May 23, 1860, p. 151.

[4]H. B. Hartzler, "Buttermilk Theology," EM, May 12, 1885, p. 296.

kinship with Schleiermacher. The espousal of Biblical criticism he criticizes because it "practically subordinates Revelation to Reason."[1] Also, he objects to making "Christian Consciousness" the ultimate authority, for "the truths of the divine Scriptures" are "the only known source of Christian consciousness."[2]

Evangelicals were not tolerant of heresy when it arose within their own church. Of four editors of church periodicals removed from their jobs, two of them lost their positions because of doctrinal deviations. Another leader, Solomon Neitz, who through much of this period was either under suspicion or actual charges of heresy on the doctrine of sanctification, was able to escape with rebukes because of his great popularity as a preacher and presiding elder of the powerful East Pennsylvania Conference.

Although United Brethren were not troubled with heresy in high offices of the church and the unpleasant task of removing such leaders, they commended similar efforts in other denominations. The Telescope approved of the prosecution of Charles Beecher in 1863. Allegedly he taught that "the wicked would find happiness in hell," that God had considerably exaggerated the description of hell in order to make men fear it, that Satan was an older brother of Christ, and that all souls pre-existed in some state other than this.[3] The trials of the Presbyterian, David Swing,[4] and a Methodist minister, a Dr. Thomas of Chicago, received similar approbation.[5]

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[1]D. B. Byers, "The New Theology," EM, October 26, 1886, pp. 673-674.

[2]Cf. a book review which links a contemporary novel with the "New Theology" (S. P. Spreng, "Fictitious Theology," EM, December 11, 1888, p. 792).

[3]"Rev. C. Beecher's Theology," RT, July 29, 1863, p. 190.

[4]RT, November 11, 1874, p. 52.

[5]Editorial, RT, October 5, 1881, p. 24.

One reason offered for the revision of the Confession of Faith in 1889 was that such action would help to make unnecessary similar trials among United Brethren.[1]

Although the concern for orthodoxy could provide a reason for cooperating with other denominations,[2] it also could dampen discussions about church union if they seemed to suggest that differences in doctrine were unimportant. During the 1840's there were conversations on the possible union of United Brethren, Evangelicals, and Wesleyan Methodists--three groups that had much in common. However, in the sixties and seventies some men were advocating union of groups that were much less congenial. United Brethren opposed these efforts to do away with denominations, for those who supported them tended to hold a view of doctrine which considered it practically irrelevant. On the occasion of the McCune heresy trial in the Cincinnati Presbytery, the Telescope editors deplored the acquittal of McCune for speaking and writing against Presbyterian doctrines while retaining membership in his church, adding their strong convictions that the anti-denominational movement was not in the best interests of the cause of Christ.[3] Some years earlier the reasons for this had been spelled out clearly:

> In its eagerness for union it disregards the religious sentiments of men, and opens wide the door of the church of Christ for the entrance of all sorts of heresy. Sound doctrine is no test or qualification for membership in the church. Universalism, infidel Unitarianism, and liberalism, are all innocent and unimportant in its estimation. Union

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[1] I. L. Kephart, Editorial, RT, October 16, 1889, p. 657. T. D. Ingle had called for a "statement of doctrine in a condensed form added to our confession of faith, to be read by the ministers every six months in all of our societies" which would serve to keep out false teaching and strangers who might "get into our fold and into our church-houses to do us harm" (RT, April 15, 1885, pp. 242-43).

[2] Supra, p. 123. [3] Editorial, RT, April 4, 1877, p. 220.

is sought for the sake of union, not for Christ's sake--a mongrel institution for social advantage rather than saving power.[1]

In most formal defenses of the faith against these diverse heresies the predominant theological method employed was that of "Christian evidences." The books on the reading courses for ministers and numerous articles in the church periodicals give clear evidence of the prevalence of this approach until near the end of the century,[2] when its philosophical bases came under attack. "Christian evidences," to which American Methodists also clung during much of the nineteenth century,[3] was a theological method popularly used in England at the time of the deistic threat to the Christian faith in the early eighteenth century. It was an apologetic attempt to find common ground with doubters by appealing to such commonplaces as the testimony of nature and conscience. The method was applied not only to these matters of "natural theology," however, but also to Scripture. Such things as the miracles and prophecies of the Bible were regarded as "evidences" of its divine origin. This approach remained popular in Christian theology throughout much of the nineteenth century, attracting Evangelicals and United Brethren because of their continuing concern for defense

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[1]Editorial, RT, January 8, 1868, p. 140. Attacking those who call non-essentials such doctrines as divinity of Christ, human depravity, and endless punishment, William McKee, a prominent United Brethren preacher, asserted that there should never be consideration of union apart from doctrinal agreement ("Doctrine and Union," RT, March 18, 1868, p. 219).

[2]Supra, p. 96. See "Evidences of the Existence of God," EM, October 13, 1859, p. 161; "The Existence of God," EM, December 21, 1864, pp. 401-402; "Brief Proofs of the Existence of God," EM, April 8, 1869, p. 105; S. W. Koontz, "Laws and Force of Reason," RT, November 22, 1876, p. 66; Rev. J. A. McDermad, "Teleological Argument for the Existence of God," RT, January 23, 1889, p. 50; I. L. Kephart, "After Twenty-Nine Years," RT, March 5, 1890, p. 130. An exposition of Hebrews 11:1 in RT, August 6, 1851, p. 195, explains faith as growing out of sufficient evidence.

[3]Leland Scott, pp. 157, 159.

of the faith.[1]

Much of the theological activity during this period compels one to conclude that Evangelicals and United Brethren did not furnish an exception to Sidney Mead's judgment that American Protestantism during the nineteenth century was generally characterized by intellectual obscurantism and indifference or opposition to "the general spirit and intellectual currents of modern Western civilization."[2] Many of the earnest efforts to defend the faith give little evidence of theological learning and maturity. Nevertheless, this was the period when theological education was begun in earnest, when institutions of higher education were established, and when these denominations became aware of the larger theological world. These efforts, however, were generally made in the interests of strengthening both partners in the alliance between "pietistic revivalism and scholastic orthodoxy" which prevailed among much of conservative American Protestantism.[3] Not until late in the century were theological inquiry and higher education carried on with any but a very constricted and static conception of truth. Until then there was little opportunity or encouragement to go beyond "pietistic revivalism and scholastic orthodoxy" because of their own denominational heritages, the spirit of the times, and the identity of the enemy.

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[1]In the last quarter of the nineteenth century several United Brethren indicated their dissatisfaction with this "evidential" approach. See B. F. Booth, "Christian Evidences," RT, July 7, 1880, p. 1; Marion R. Drury, The Life and Career of James William Hott (Dayton, Ohio: United Brethren Publishing House, 1902), p. 155. J. P. Landis quotes Samuel Harris on the insufficiency of Butler, Paley, and the Bridgewater Treatises ("Theology," Christian Doctrine, A Comprehensive View of Doctrinal and Practical Theology, ed. Bishop Jonathan Weaver [Dayton, Ohio: United Brethren Publishing House, 1894], p. 30).

[2]Sidney Mead, The Lively Experiment (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 127.

[3]Smith, Handy, Loetscher, II, 312.

VII. THE ADOPTION OF A PHILOSOPHY

The stereotype of two small, pietistically-inclined, anti-intellectual denominations is one which thus far this study has partially confirmed and partially modified. An examination of the early period did not result in a major modification of the stereotype, at least so far as its aversion to philosophy is concerned. Fear of philosophy and the conviction of its irrelevance to matters of religion did not disappear in the middle period.

The theme appears in many of the major leaders of the period. Glossbrenner, a United Brethren bishop throughout most of these years (1845-87), said that "what the world needs is not the husks of old speculations and dogmas," but "the simple gospel of Christ."[1] With no apology, in a memorial sermon at the 1877 General Conference he pronounced the late Bishop Edwards "a biblical, if not peculiarly a logical divine."[2] The Evangelicals praised Bishop Orwig because "he did not indulge in speculative flights, nor care for metaphysical disquisitions, nor the fine-spun theories of modern philosophers."[3]

Both church papers continually exhibit this sentiment. For instance, an almost unnecessary warning against pride in intellectual attainments appears in the very first volume of the Messenger. Ministers who devote all their time to study and the work of the ministry must guard against the sin

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[1]A. W. Drury, The Life of Bishop J. J. Glossbrenner (Dayton, Ohio: United Brethren Publishing House, 1889), p. 346.

[2]GCJUB, 1877, p. 68.

[3]See Rudolph Dubs' funeral discourse in EM, June 4, 1889, p. 356. Also see EM, March 25, 1890, p. 181.

of pride. Plain, uneducated Christians, "but full of humility, surpass--far excell the greatest philosopher that ever lived, lacking this most essential quality."[1] The Telescope praised President Mahan of Oberlin for his avoidance of speculation; instead, all his energies seemed "bent for the conversion of sinners and the perfection of believers in the work of holiness."[2]

Philosophical understanding was only valuable for the Christian if he directly related it to the practical. Methodism got no criticism for having earned the title of "religion without philosophy."[3] Learning had for its purpose moral improvement, and the capacity to "win souls to Christ."[4] John Lawrence delighted in poking fun at the impracticality of the "unfledged stripling" rising in the pulpit and gravely announcing "some new metaphysical theory which is to throw light through the whole realm of theology."[5] On this matter John Wesley remained an authority with his advice on the formation of theological views:

> I design plain truth for a plain people, therefore for a set purpose. I abstain from all nice and philosophical speculations, from all perplexed and intricate reasoning, as far as possible, or even the least show of learning. I labor to avoid all words which are not easily to be understood,--all which are not used in common life,--and particularly

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[1] "Humility in our Intellectual Acquirements," EM, September 22, 1848, p. 70.

[2] RT, December 22, 1841, p. 35.

[3] EM, February 22, 1850, p. 14. As late as 1885 the Rev. E. S. Lorenz criticized certain reforms which were being undertaken in Germany because they were inspired by philosophical motives, not religious ones ("Recent German Orthodoxy," RT, January 7, 1885, p. 17).

[4] See "Who Are the Best Ministers?" EM, May 22, 1849, p. 40; "The Education of a Man," EM, June 22, 1851, p. 81.

[5] John Lawrence, Editorial, RT, June 20, 1855, p. 162.

> those kinds of technical terms that so frequently occur in bodies of divinity.[1]

"Truth is a life," affirmed Bishop Castle, "not a controversy or a child of it."[2]

After 1850, however, this anti-intellectualism rapidly became only a minor theme. The warfare against reason all but ceased. So much is said in favor of reason and philosophy that one is tempted to talk about a growing alliance between religion and reason among Evangelicals and United Brethren. The rationalism or theological scholasticism of many denominations during this period is not particularly surprising, but to find it among Evangelicals and United Brethren is puzzling indeed. Yet this is exactly what occurs, although not on such a large scale or with the theological and philosophical sophistication which Hodge and the Princeton Presbyterians possessed.

As early as 1848 the editor of the Telescope could not pass by an attack on reason by a correspondent without coming to its defense. Reason, at least in the abstract, is not a blind guide; true reason leads the soul to God, who himself is a reasonable being as is his religion. In fact, "in all the book of God and economy of divine grace there is not an unreasonable thought nor requirement."[3] Some of the doctrines of revelation may be above reason, but not contrary to it. Editor Edwards, however, had not gone beyond Watson, the theological mentor for almost all Evangelicals and United Brethren until the 1880's,[4] for he still held that sin seriously

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[1]Quoted in D. Oaks, "Centennial Notes," RT, July 22, 1874, p. 337.

[2]Nicholas Castle, "Breaking a Commandment to Keep a Doctrine," RT, January 17, 1877, p. 129.

[3]David Edwards, Editorial, RT, August 30, 1848, p. 36. Cf. "Faith Not Opposed to Reason," RT, December 31, 1862, p. 69.

[4]Supra, pp. 44, 46-47.

perverts man's reason. This doctrine was modified as the end of the century approached.

Defenders against infidelity began to appeal to reason rather than to the Bible, for it was beating the infidel at his own game. Using this approach, Editor Clewell attempted to show that there was "no system of philosophy so utterly unphilosophical as atheistic philosophy."[1] When Garrison's Liberator gave a favorable review of a pamphlet which purported to show the utter absurdity of the doctrine of the plenary inspiration of the Bible by pointing out the "multitudinous self-contradictions of the Bible which no ingenuity of interpretation can reconcile," H. A. Thompson, president of Western College and long an educational leader of the United Brethren, replied: "On the contrary we think the Bible a reasonable book, Christianity a rational religion, and faith in its teachings, the very perfection of reason."[2]

In an intriguing editorial in 1874 Jacob Hartzler remarks that it is an age of reason, not of faith, and no one should deplore this tendency in contemporary education. He implicitly indicates in an aside that he would not want to be accused of the anti-intellectual obscurantism of which Romanism is guilty in its suppression of the spirit of investigation. No doubt he is aware of the decisions of the recent Vatican Council and of the Syllabus of Errors ten years previous.[3] He admits that there is danger

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[1]T. G. Clewell, "Faith Versus Folly," EM, April 5, 1860, p. 52. Cf. T. G. Clewell, "Have We a Word of God?" EM, August 24, 1864, p. 268.

[2]H. A. Thompson, "Self-Contradictions of the Bible," RT, October 16, 1861, p. 25.

[3]Pius IX's Syllabus of Errors condemns a whole list of modern "errors," among which were separation of church and state and freedom of worship. The Vatican Council of 1869-70 recognized the infallibility of the pope when speaking ex cathedra on matters of faith and morals.

in the critical examination of the Bible, but with considerable sympathy with the point of view of the infidel, who relies on reason, he declares:

> It will not do to tell them they ought not to treat the Bible and Christianity so; nor to sneer at them as pretenders to greater wisdom than their elders; nor attempt to force them to a blind and unwilling adherence to the truth; nor to push them away as reprobates and infidels. . . . What they need is sincere sympathy in their efforts to fight error with the weapons in which they have been trained, and in which they are skilled. The Church must realize that men demand a basis of reason for the religion they are asked to accept, and that anything less would, under the circumstances, be unreasonable. It should be remembered, too, that unconsciously, the Church has been the agent in promoting this spirit of liberty, the very pulpit contributing thereto; for very largely it deals in proving from human reason, from science, from common sense the truths of the Bible, as if they were not true, without the support of such proof.[1]

The rationalistic approach to the Bible which Hartzler described became increasingly dominant in both churches.[2] In 1872 a graduating senior at North-Western College, Charles Naumann, asserted in his oration that it is "through man's intellect that his moral nature is reached." Here is the "natural point of contact to which a Divine revelation may appeal." Naumann is rash enough to say not only that "it is only by our reason that we can determine whether a revelation be adapted to the wants of man," but also that "if it should be contradictory to reason, Reason must stand and Revelation must fall."[3] He probably saved his skin by going on to reassure his hearers that of course this had never happened. Reason always corroborates revelation (Christian) and provides invincible answers to the infidel.

Many were proclaiming the essential reasonableness of the Biblical

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[1]Jacob Hartzler, "Skepticism and the Church," EM, June 25, 1874, p. 204.

[2]"The Bible Friendly to Reason," EM, June 9, 1852, p. 89; EM, June 23, 1852, pp. 97-98; "Christianity in Harmony With the Intellect," EM, April 11, 18, 25, 1872, pp. 113, 121, 129; "A Revelation Reasonable," EM, February 21, 1855, p. 28.

[3]Charles Naumann, "Intellectual and Moral Culture," EM, July 11, 1872, p. 220.

revelation. Bishop Weaver, sounding like a voice out of the eighteenth century, was affirming that there is nothing in revelation which is contrary to reason.[1] Another rejoiced that there were no serious contradictions in the Bible and that the variant readings brought to light by textual critics did not affect the contents; even the mysteries in the Bible "are such as commend themselves to the reason and force its assent."[2] Editor I. L. Kephart of the Telescope contended that "a candid examination of the Bible throughout reveals the fact that its teachings are all in harmony with candor, reason, thorough investigation."[3]

Spokesmen of both churches began to defend other articles of Christian faith by the appeal to reason. T. G. Clewell referred to doctrines about the nature and attributes of God as "just and rational" in his paper before a district meeting of ministers in Ohio.[4] With regard to the doctrine of the freedom of the will, the Rev. S. J. Gamertsfelder asserted that "it is only through sound reasoning and revelation that the scales of error are made to drop from our eyes."[5] Bishop Weaver proclaimed that

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[1]Jonathan Weaver, "Religion--Natural and Revealed," RT, April 26, 1871, p. 265.

[2]"Infidel Objections to Christianity," RT, September 1, 1880, p. 1.

[3]I. L. Kephart, "Philosophy and Christianity," RT, August 21, 1889, p. 529. The Rev. J. W. Fulkerson argued that "Christianity is a science that challenges investigation as readily as chemistry;" the Christian need have no fear, for he could rest assured that his faith was entirely rational despite its "difficulties and mysteries" ("Christianity," RT, December 5, 1883, p. 169). Also see S. W. Koontz, "Laws and Force of Reason," RT, November 22, 1876, p. 66.

[4]T. G. Clewell, "The Divinity of the Bible," EM, October 14, 1857, pp. 164-65. Cf. J. Arkless, "Christianity in Harmony With the Intellect," EM, April 11, 1872, p. 113.

[5]S. J. Gamertsfelder, "Freedom of the Will," EM, May 1, 1879, p. 1. Editor J. W. Hott defended the doctrine of the divinity of Christ on philosophical grounds, using the law of causality, which was accepted as a self-evident truth ("Mistakes of Infidels," RT, September 26, 1883, p. 8).

"there is nothing more in harmony with the highest order of reason than the blessed old doctrine of vicarious atonement."[1]

Men now interpreted faith as a "perfectly rational exercise of the mind."[2] Acknowledging that faith has to do both with the heart and the mind, the Rev. Z. Warner saw the intellect as "never so magnified as when believing in the unseen and eternal." In judging the truth of a proposition the process goes like this:

> Up to a given point the light of understanding shines brightly on the whole process. At that point, however, the materials, so to speak, on which reason has been operating, are exhausted, and yet reason itself knows that something more remains--feels that another step should be taken--trembles consciously on the verge of ultimate truth, of which it has long been in quest. And the act of passing from the known to the unknown, is an act of faith, an act which has been compelled by reason, an act which expresses the final convictions of the judgment, an act in which intellect takes wing, and reason commits itself to the most probable issues of its own calculations.[3]

Strengthening this point of view was the conviction of "the amazing affinity" of the mind with God.[4] Hence, there could be "nothing more reasonable than trust in God, on the part of his children."[5] A. A. Smith was telling students at North-Western College that "as the key is adapted to the lock, natural light to the eye, so is the light of Christianity adapted to the powers of the human mind."[6] Henry Garst at Otterbein was affirming the

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[1]Jonathan Weaver, "The Atonement," RT, December 24, 1884, pp. 1050-51.

[2]"The Reasonableness of Faith," RT, December 18, 1872, p. 121.

[3]Z. Warner, "Faith," RT, April 12, 1871, p. 249. Editor Spreng of the Messenger echoes this confidence in the harmony of faith and reason, but he is far more restrained in his praise; he does not want his words to be construed as implying that "all the objects of faith are fully comprehended by reason" or that "faith should accept only what reason demonstrated" ("Rational Faith," EM, May 8, 1888, p. 296).

[4]James T. Bradford, "The Affinity of Mind with God," RT, November 13, 1872, p. 82.

[5]Editorial, RT, September 17, 1873, p. 436. [6]A. A. Smith, p. 157.

"correspondence between the divine mind . . . and the human mind."[1]

Philosophy, the old enemy, more and more was embraced as a valuable ally. Even Orwig, the earnest defender of orthodoxy, advised his readers in the Botschafter to study philosophy.[2] Anton Huelster, instructor of theological students at North-Western College, shows clearly his appreciation of philosophy. In a vision of the intimate relation between religion and philosophy he refers to Plato's idea of "God as the Absolute Idea" and asks:

> Is it not a glorious thought that by virtue of religion we can hold intercourse with this august and good Being, the source of all life, truth and happiness? If it affords us so much pleasure to study the works of nature, then certainly the intellectual and living acquaintance with God will afford us true and lasting happiness. In God, who is being par excellence, we perceive science in a clearer light, as Plato remarks, and it belongs to the soul to conceive the universal as a rational unity.[3]

In his Seelenlehre Huelster did not limit his sources of information to the Bible, preferring instead "a philosophical analysis" of the questions before him. Wherever possible, of course, he wants to demonstrate conformity with the Scripture. The relation between philosophy and theology he finds is close indeed, for philosophy at its "highest step of perfection . . . passes over into theology."[4] In his efforts to distinguish his "Christian theism" from pantheism and materialism he demonstrates considerable familiarity with contemporary philosophy in Germany, where he had studied in the sixties.

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[1]Henry Garst, "Christian Education," Christian Doctrine, ed. Bishop Jonathan Weaver (Dayton, Ohio: United Brethren Publishing House, 1894), p. 592.

[2]Orwig, History, pp. 336-37.

[3]Anton Huelster, "The Importance of Religious Culture," EM, April 6, 1871, p. 105.

[4]Huelster, Seelenlehre, p. vii.

Reporting on the commencement of Union Biblical Seminary, Editor J. W. Hott commended F. P. Sanders, a graduating senior, for his address on "Philosophy and Theology," which showed how they may be reconciled. Expressing joy at the reconciliation and "unity" of the two, Sanders was "grateful that philosophy enables us to explain the glorious power and goodness of God."[1] Sanders reflects the views of his teacher, Professor J. P. Landis, who calls philosophy the "formal source of theology." Although it is something more than philosophy, one's theology is inevitably shaped by his philosophy. Hence, since one cannot proceed without it, or at least without making certain implicit assumptions which should be consciously examined, to study philosophy is important. Crooks, Hurst, Noah Porter, and Sir William Hamilton are Landis's authorities, the last of which he quotes in support. He explains that the student can see the importance of philosophy and its relation to theology by asking such questions as the following:

> Can we know God? (Agnosticism denies that we can know him.) Can we know the Infinite or the Absolute? What are the proofs of God's existence? Is God a person? (Pantheism denies that he is a person.) What is personality? What is spirit? What is matter? What is an attribute? What is free-will or free agency? And so on with others. According as our answer is in any one of these questions, so will largely our theology be, for so will be our interpretation of the Bible and the facts of our own consciousness.[2]

Philosophical knowledge among United Brethren had advanced by 1889 to the point that in a debate over the merits of Watson's Institutes for the Course of Study, there could occur on the floor of General Conference a discussion of his epistemological presuppositions.[3]

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[1] J. W. Hott, "Seminary Commencement," RT, May 15, 1878, p. 268.

[2] J. P. Landis, "That Theology," RT, February 22, 1888, p. 113.

[3] GCJUB, 1889, p. 350. Gilbert Haven, the Methodist, objected to Watson because he could not accept Watson's derogation of the powers of human reason (Leland Scott, p. 174n).

So strong did this approval of philosophy become that J. W. Hott felt compelled to warn against too great dependence on it. Although he bids "scientific and philosophical investigation good speed," he prays that the Lord will "deliver us from Bible interpretation dictated supremely by philosophical theories rather than by the Holy Spirit." Since ministers often were discussing philosophical theories in the pulpit, Hott warned that the church needs to be "saved from a ministry which will substitute the great-grand, soul-saving doctrines of the cross and man's need of a Savior with crude theories, discussions, and statements of speculations which have been born in our times."[1]

Scottish Common-Sense Realism

The philosophy which Evangelicals and United Brethren came to embrace so whole-heartedly was, of course, Scottish Common-Sense realism. This explains why there was so little struggle against philosophy as soon as men began to go to college and study philosophy. What they found was a philosophy that was congenial on so many counts to the temper of their church. Sydney Ahlstrom points out that the Scottish Philosophy had come "to exist in America . . . as a vast subterranean influence, a sort of water-table nourishing dogmatics in an age of increasing doubt."[2] The prevalence of this philosophy is exceedingly important for the history of Evangelicals and United Brethren. Negatively, it reduced the fear of higher education and German rationalism. Positively, it fitted the pattern of engaging in theological activity for the purpose of affirming and

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[1]J. W. Hott, Editorial, RT, November 15, 1882, p. 120. Hott warns against reducing "all things to the consistency of philosophy" ("Danger of Modern Tendencies in Christianity," RT, February 27, 1889, p. 129).

[2]Sydney E. Ahlstrom, "Scottish Philosophy and American Theology," Church History, XXIV (September, 1955), 268.

defending the faith, for it "was an apologetical philosophy, par excellence."[1]

Both denominations accepted and espoused Scottish Philosophy as an almost "official philosophy."[2] With its vindication of the substantial, active, personal self, and the appeal to concrete, evidential concepts, it suited the practical temper of these common people who could not have appreciated the epistemological subtleties of Kant.[3] Also, it furnished an appropriate weapon to defend orthodoxy without becoming deeply involved in philosophical speculation. One could adopt the conclusions of Scottish Philosophy and thus be immune both from any further serious philosophical inquiry (at least, of basic presuppositions), and also from the accusations of anti-intellectualism by the infidel. It provided a philosophical basis for biblicism and a shelter against the unpredictable currents of an uncontrolled empiricism.

Attribution of causes, however, can be misleading. These churchmen did not adopt the Scottish Philosophy for purely utilitarian reasons. They did not consciously, deliberately pick the philosophy which promised the best mileage. Evangelicals and United Brethren adopted Common-Sense Realism for the same reason that they had not been interested in philosophy in the earlier years--because this attitude seemed to fit the facts of life as they understood them. Even the most radical Existentialist who holds that life is absurd presumably thinks that it is not absurd to hold such a view--or for his life to be lived as though this were the case. All the sub-conscious and underlying motivations must not be underestimated, of course.

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[1] Ibid, p. 267.

[2] At the time Evangelicals and United Brethren began to extend their reading beyond the Bible, the hymnbook, and the discipline, they felt the greatest kinship with Methodist writers, who had already come to some appreciation of Scottish Philosophy (Leland Scott, pp. 93, 94, 189).

[3] Ibid., p. 94.

Often self-interest is not consciously recognized. Nevertheless, we must assume that Evangelicals and United Brethren possessed a certain measure of personal integrity which would prevent them from adopting the Scottish Philosophy for the purely utilitarian purpose of acquiring an apologetical tool.

Honest conviction is evident in a letter written by A. W. Drury during a summer of study in Germany whence he had gone with a seminary colleague.[1] Commenting on the influence of Kant which he observed in Germany, he remarked that one of his professors pointed out the benefits for religion in cutting it off from philosophy and science. This was Drury's reaction:

> My humble judgment is that if religion and science can not stand together in the same sphere and rest on the same general basis, the one or the other, if not both, should be held up as an object of scorn.
>
> It is well known that Kant took religion, as regards its ground, out of the province of the understanding, and planted it in the field of the feelings and the will. Schleiermacher recognized this procedure as just, and built upon it. If this method does not actually lead to the substitution of a natural standard in the place of the Bible, it yet tends to subject to this natural standard, both the proofs of the Bible and the method of interpretation. One is astonished at hearing from the theological professors so much on "inner experience," especially at their making this so exclusively the ground for accepting the Bible as a revelation from God. . . .
>
> I am conceited enough to believe that the Scotch philosophy, which is the ruling philosophy in America, and which represents also in the main the English people throughout the world, is much more sensible, true, and practically efficient than the varying philosophies of Germany. This philosophy brings the mind into contact with the world, opens up objective sources and evidences, and gives to experience whether in the form of testimony or instruction, in proper connection with a priori elements, the credit that is due, and so provides a foundation for definite and positive building.[2]

Scottish Realism infiltrated the ranks of Evangelicals and United Brethren in various ways. One was through the theologians at Oberlin, who

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[1] Drury was Professor of Church History at Union Biblical Seminary.

[2] A. W. Drury, "Letter from Berlin," RT, August 18, 1886, p. 521.

were devotees of the New Haven Theology, for various ties led to association and fellowship with Oberlin men.[1] Another link was the stream of United Brethren theological students to Yale Divinity School.[2] This probably did not begin until after Nathaniel Taylor's death, but the influence of Scottish Realism continued in the teaching of Taylor's successors, Noah Porter and Samuel Harris.[3] In a series of articles on the New England Theology, E. S. Lorenz implies that he was taught Taylorism at Yale. Lorenz, who had studied his theology under Harris, reported that

> the principles of Taylor were gradually accepted, and are now the commonplaces of New England theology and the general basis of the systems of present theological teachers at the various Congregational seminaries in New England and the West. Professor Park, of Andover, of whom Joseph Cook speaks in such extravagant terms, differs from Taylor only in that he rejects his hedonistic theory of ethics substituting the intentional or rational theory. . . . Unless psychology makes greater advances in the future than now seems possible, the development and growth of New England theology is ended, and the system of Taylor will remain as the consummation of the theological thought of New England.[4]

The names of prominent promulgators of the Scottish Philosophy--Thomas Reid, Dugald Stewart, Sir William Hamilton, and James McCosh--appear frequently in denominational literature.[5] I. L. Kephart wrote a front-page

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[1]John and Henry Cowles had studied at Yale Divinity School under Nathaniel Taylor, who embraced Scottish Realism. See G. Frederick Wright, Charles Grandison Finney (New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1893), p. 181; Bainton, pp. 96-101.

[2]Supra, pp. 92-94. [3]Bainton, pp. 166-67, 169-73.

[4]E. S. Lorenz, "New England Theology," RT, June 6, 1883, pp. 578-79.

[5]"The Pastoral Office - III," EM, July 8, 1869, pp. 209-210; editorial note in EM, February 26, 1874, p. 68; J. P. Landis, "That Theology," RT, February 22, 1888, p. 113. Thomas Reid (1710-96) was an early leader of Scottish Realism, having been appointed to the professorship of moral philosophy at Glasgow in 1764 shortly after the appearance of his book, An Inquiry into the Human Mind, on the Principles of Common Sense ("Reid, Thomas," The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, IX [1911], 447-48). Dugald Stewart attended the lectures of Reid and later became the professor of moral philosophy at Edinburgh (1785-1820); his Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind in three volumes appeared

editorial commending Reid and Stewart for their important corrections of Locke, Berkeley, and Hume.[1] In his immensely popular lectures Joseph Cook expressed his profound appreciation for the work of all these men.[2] Joseph Haven's Mental Philosophy and Richard Whateley's Logic were integral parts of both denominations' ministerial Course of Study for many years.[3]

Another evidence of the prevalence of the Scottish Philosophy is the heavy reliance on the idea of "self-evident truths," which was a trademark of the system.[4] Anton Huelster appeals to the principle to support a contextual approach to a Biblical interpretation of the millennium.[5] Also, he

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between 1792 and 1827 ("Stewart, Dugald," The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, XI [1911], 90). Sir William Hamilton (1788-1856), who modified the Scottish Philosophy because of his acquaintance with Kant's position, was elected to the chair of logic and metaphysics in the University of Edinburgh in 1836 after earning his reputation as a philosopher by a series of articles that began to appear in the Edinburgh Review in 1829 ("Hamilton, Sir William," The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, V [1909], 133-34). James McCosh, a Scotsman who was president of Princeton University from 1868 to 1888, was a leading exponent of the Scottish Philosophy in America; some of his most important books were The Intuitions of the Mind, Inductively Investigated, 1860; The Supernatural in Relation to the Natural, 1862; The Scottish Philosophy, Biographical, Expository, Critical, 1874; and The Realistic Philosophy Defended, 1887 ("McCosh, James," The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, VII [1910], 108-109).

[1]I. L. Kephart, "The Truth Must Be Sought," RT, October 9, 1889, p. 641.

[2]Joseph Cook, "What Shall Be the New Theology?" RT, March 5, 1884, pp. 379-380.

[3]EM, January 29, 1884, p. 34; EM, September 6, 1860, p. 137; Discipline of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, 1873, 1877, 1881, 1885. Both Haven and Whateley were devotees of the Scottish Philosophy. See John Haynes Holmes, "Haven, Joseph," Dictionary of American Biography, ed. Dumas Malone, VIII (1932), 409-410; "Whateley, Richard," Dictionary of National Biography, ed. Sidney Lee, XX (1909), 1334-1340.

[4]See Ahlstrom, Church History, XXIV, 261. Also see "Faith--the Basis of All Knowledge," RT, July 9, 1856, p. 171; T. G. Clewell, "Faith Versus Folly," EM, April 5, 1860, p. 52.

[5]Anton Huelster, "The Millennium," EM, September 19, 1866, pp. 297-298.

uses the principle to support belief in the existence of God:

> It is not until this voice [conscience] is willfully silenced, and, for the most part, until the heart is estranged from God through sin, that man shuts his eyes against the self-evident truth of the divine existence. A self-evident truth is its own verification, and needs no argumentation to enhance its lustre.[1]

Joseph Cook gave the doctrine of "self-evident truths" one of its greatest boosts. In a summary of one of his lectures the Telescope editor noted that Cook began with natural theology, which was good so far as it went, furnishing us with a number of self-evident truths.[2] Cook laid it down as a dictum that any new theology "must be in harmony with all self-evident truth."[3] Indeed, he was willing to go so far as to say that "self-evident truth is the final test of certainty" and that "the sum of self-evident truths is but the way of God's action."[4]

When the Rev. J. Noel defined common sense as "a compound of sound practical judgment and instantaneous reason," he was probably using the latter term to refer to man's ability to grasp self-evident truths.[5] United Brethren fully accepted this doctrine, for Professor J. P. Landis of Union Biblical Seminary acknowledged "self-evident truths lying within the mind" as an important source of natural theology and "recognized in the Word of God."[6]

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[1]Anton Huelster, "The Relation of Science to Religion," EM, November 1, 1881, p. 2.

[2]RT, December 31, 1879, p. 2.

[3]Joseph Cook, "Do We Need a New Theology?" RT, February 20, 1884, pp. 347-348.

[4]RT, February 27, 1884, p. 363; RT, April 11, 1888, p. 234.

[5]RT, May 2, 1877, p. 249.

[6]J. P. Landis, "Theology," Christian Doctrine, ed. Bishop Jonathan Weaver, p. 33.

The epistemological, ontological, and cosmological dualisms of the Scottish Philosophy are clearly discernible in Evangelical and United Brethren literature. The static conception of truth which was prevalent in the early period was partly the result of epistemological dualism. The conviction that truth is essentially unchangeable was in harmony with a substantialist understanding of the nature of reality and a clear-cut distinction between subject and object which saw the subject as having no modifying effect upon the objects grasped by it.[1]

The acceptance of the mind-matter dualism is at least as evident. In 1858 Editor John Lawrence heard an address at Otterbein University. Walker, the acting president, was speaking that day, and his subject was Progress. "He started out with an improved doctrine of the old Gnostic philosophy, assuming that a conflict exists between matter and spirit, and that all progress is indicated by the subjection of the material to the spiritual," a thesis which the editor regarded as "probably a fallacy."[2] Walker's views were too extreme for Lawrence and probably added to his bias against educational institutions. But Walker's was not a lone voice; other teachers besides those at Otterbein were inculcating some version of mind-matter dualism.[3] Joseph Cook introduced Evangelicals and United Brethren to Lotze, expressed his approval of him as a corrective of Kant, but warned that he could not accept "his theory that matter is nothing but the

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[1]See S. P. Spreng, "The Latest Edition of Beecherism," EM, August 1, 1882, p. 241.

[2]RT, March 24, 1858, p. 114.

[3]Charles Naumann, "Intellectual and Moral Culture," EM, July 11, 1872, p. 220. Supra, p. 136. In his series of articles on the "Immortality of the Soul" the Rev. J. K. Alwood, who was a conservative in other matters, lists as his third argument what he regards as the obvious superiority of mind over matter (RT, October 19, 1870, p. 49).

spiritual action upon us of personal beings outside us."[1] In a series of articles which extended for a period of more than a year, John Wagner hammered away at the theme: "Mind and Matter Different Entities."[2]

Evidences of cosmological dualism abound. H. Eby probably spoke for the majority when he objected to Bishop John Dickson's recommendation of Drummond's Natural Law in the Spiritual World as "a very able book, and deserving of a large reading and study."[3] "How could anything be 'natural' and 'spiritual' at the same time?" asked Eby.[4] I. L. Kephart extolled "true scientific investigation" for taking into account "the whole round of existences--all discovered facts--especially the fact of the supernatural."[5] Proponents of the Scottish Philosophy did not hesitate to call the supernatural a "fact."

The significance of Scottish Realism for theology is noteworthy. Ahlstrom's insight is important, for he notes that "by a firm separation of the Creator and His creation, the Scottish thinkers preserved the orthodox notion of God's transcendance, and made revelation necessary."[6] This position buttressed Watson's emphasis on man's need for a revelation coming from outside himself, and he remained the theological mentor for both Evangelicals and United Brethren throughout most of this period. This helps to

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[1] RT, March 26, 1884, pp. 427-428.

[2] John Wagner, "Mind and Matter Different Entities," RT, November 21, 1888, p. 738; RT, December 11, 1889, p. 786. I. L. Kephart objected strongly to the "unscientific" view that the brain, "as a mere material organ and as a result of motion superinduced by heat, originates thought" ("The True vs. the Materialistic Scientist," RT, February 5, 1890, p. 81).

[3] Dickson, although having some experience as a school teacher, had been quite limited in his educational opportunities.

[4] RT, September 14, 1887, p. 578. [5] RT, October 23, 1889, p. 673.

[6] Ahlstrom, Church History, XXIV, 267.

account for the biblicism which dominated both denominations.[1]

To write off "Biblical authoritarianism" as having historical rootage in the left wing of the Reformation or as being primarily nourished by obscurantistic and conservative institutionalists is far too facile an explanation. C. Howard Hopkins has dubbed it the "frozen foundation of complacency,"[2] but perhaps it is something more. Someone else's theological battles are often difficult to appreciate; to duplicate the feelings of others towards the convictions which constitute their intellectual and moral equipment is no easy task for the interpreter. Given the commitment of Evangelicals and United Brethren to Watson, plus the modifications of Common-Sense Philosophy (particularly its cosmological dualism), to abandon biblicism would have been virtually tantamount to abandoning the faith itself. The possible alternative was to change their philosophical principles, and they had not closed their minds to that possibility. We should accept biblicism for what it was, an expression of the lively conviction of man's need for revelation from the transcendent God, not simply an obscurantistic "frozen foundation of complacency." Of course, vested interests and entrenched conservatism played their roles, but no live alternatives really were available so long as Evangelicals and United Brethren lived under the philosophical roof of the Scottish Philosophy.

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[1]Mead, pp. 108ff. One may well ask why men who reserved divinity and perfection to a supernatural God did not recognize the finiteness of the Bible. The answer probably lies in the epistemological dualism to which this position was related. If the subject has virtually no modifying effect upon that which it comes to know, then it is logical to hold that because the Bible is nothing other than the self-revelation of God to man, it requires no criticism. Since it is solely a divine product, it escapes the contamination of human thought.

[2]C. Howard Hopkins, The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism 1865-1915 (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1940), pp. 14-16.

The services which Common-Sense Philosophy performed were varied. Editor Lawrence appealed to common sense in his attack on the Mercersburg Theology.[1] Lawrence deemed it useful in attacking the jargon of German Rationalism, too.[2] The self-confidence and certainty engendered by Scottish Philosophy also bolstered the venerable Wesleyan doctrine of assurance.[3]

What were the effects of the commitment to Scottish Philosophy? Ahlstrom describes three contributions it made to American theology. The first two, being references to modifications in Calvinistic doctrines of God and man, apply more appropriately to those churches which stood more directly in the Calvinistic tradition. Evangelicals and United Brethren had already moved away from the "fervent theocentricity of Calvin" and had accorded man a large place in his own salvation. But the third contribution applies to them.

> Scottish Realism accelerated the long trend toward rational theology which had developed, especially in England, during and after the long Deistic controversy. Combined as it was with an all too facile dismissal of Hume's critique, Reid's influence on subsequent thinkers in the Scottish tradition served to reinforce the prestige of thinkers like Locke, Butler, and Paley, who were reinterpreted in accordance with the typical Scottish emphasis. There resulted a neo-rationalism which rendered the central Christian paradoxes into stark, logical contradictions that had either to be disguised or explained away.[4]

The foregoing pages document the trend toward rational theology, and the Courses of Study of both denominations demonstrate that the prestige of Butler and Paley and the whole approach of Christian evidences was

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[1] RT, February 20, 1856, p. 92.

[2] "German Rationalism," RT, December 19, 1860, p. 61.

[3] See H. S. Zimmerman's "The Believer's Assurance," RT, June 25, 1873, p. 338, which begins with an appeal to common sense, although he doesn't call it that.

[4] Ahlstrom, Church History, XXIV, 267.

reinforced. Both churches used books of this kind well into the twentieth century, Butler's Analogy of Religion remaining on the United Brethren course until the 1909 General Conference.

By 1890 a few signs of dissatisfaction with the Common-Sense Philosophy appeared, and some men were disposed to advance beyond it. In his address at the opening of Union Biblical Seminary in 1885 A. W. Drury argued against the accepted dogma that "all we need is common sense and the Bible."[1] Men began to read Lotze,[2] who during these years was also the great mentor of the rising school of Personal Idealists in the Methodist Church. Men began to talk about the need for "system" and comprehensiveness in philosophy, suggesting an interest in Hegel and his Idealistic successors rather than in Scottish Philosophy. Evangelicals and United Brethren did not close their minds to new trends of thought. One reason for this was their involvement in higher education, where one would expect new ideas to arise and be discussed. To another reason we now turn.

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[1] A. W. Drury, "Theological Knowledge and Ministerial Training," RT, September 9, 1885, p. 578.

[2] RT, February 3, 1886, p. 66. Supra, p. 147.

VIII. JOSEPH COOK

Who was Joseph Cook? Few people today have ever heard of him. The encyclopedias provide an outline of his life, but he is not important enough to rate any mention in most contemporary treatments of American Christianity. Smith-Handy-Loetscher, Brauer, Mead, Marty, Olmstead, and Hudson all pass him by,[1] for he was not an original thinker--just a publicist for others. But for our present concern he looms large.

Flavius Josephus Cook (1838-1901) was born at Ticonderoga, New York. After an education at Yale, Harvard, and Andover Theological Seminary, he studied abroad for several years. Upon his return he quickly gained a reputation as a lecturer, appearing in Tremont Temple for the Boston Monday Lectures between 1874 and 1895. At first printed in newspapers, his lectures later appeared in book form, filling eleven volumes, the most popular of which was his Biology. His audiences in Boston were usually quite large; and many well-informed people who were interested in the latest trends of scholarship, particularly in the area of the relation of science and religion, flocked to hear him. Cook's lectures covered a variety of subjects, but his reputation was built on his ability to explain the ideas of contemporary European (particularly Continental) philosophers and theologians and to comfort the orthodox by showing that what scientists were saying "was either incorrect or was wholly compatible with revealed

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[1] C. H. Hopkins takes note of him in The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism 1865-1915, pp. 31, 39-42, 43, 73, 74, 75, 95.

religion."[1] Journals such as the Nation and Popular Science Monthly criticized him on scientific matters, pointing out that his knowledge in science was superficial and that he did not speak with any authority for scientists. Nevertheless, he was exceedingly attractive to the protectors of orthodoxy.

He was, moreover, the most important single influence upon the theological understanding and activity of Evangelicals and United Brethren during the late 1870's and the 1880's. His name appears everywhere; he was almost universally praised, quoted and copied. His significance for this study is twofold. On the one hand, Cook reinforced the pattern of engaging in theological activity for defensive purposes; he was an apologist and a polemicist.[2] On the other hand, because he was such an orthodox apologist, he provided a "safe" means of becoming acquainted with the larger theological world. He became an unsuspecting and unsuspected "fence" for the hot goods of German theological liberalism. Once acquainted with this larger world beyond their limited theological horizons, Evangelicals and United Brethren began to modify some of their theological and philosophical convictions, for intellectual curiosity led them to exploration and experimentation with some new ideas, and it all seemed perfectly proper with Joseph Cook as their reliable guide. The effect of the flirtation with Cook was thus ambivalent. On the one hand, he provided them with some even stronger weapons for the defense of the faith. On the other hand, not only did Cook offer some ideas of his own which were more liberal than their own (on Biblical criticism, for example), but he stimulated their curiosity about a new theological world, the exploration of which led, in

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[1]Francis P. Weisenburger, Ordeal of Faith: The Crisis of Church-Going America, 1865-1900 (New York: Philosophical Library, 1959), p. 71.

[2]Cook once said that "victory honestly gained over determined opponents is a mark of progress in theology" (RT, February 27, 1884, p. 363.

turn, to varieties of theological activity far beyond defense of the faith.

From Affinity to Affiliation

One indication of Cook's enormous popularity is the fact that the church periodicals followed him all over the world. They recorded almost every major move; they provided abundant publicity for his lectures, his pronouncements, and his travels. The first mention in either of the major periodicals was in late 1876 when a report of one of his lectures appeared in the Messenger.[1] From that time onward he is hardly allowed out of sight. The following summer he appeared at Lake Bluff, Illinois, at a Sunday School Assembly. Evangelical ministers who heard him there sent glowing reports to the Messenger. The Rev. W. H. Bucks, a twenty-nine-year-old minister from Ohio who later was a presiding elder and editor of the Messenger, described the powerful effect Cook had on his auditors:

> During his lectures at Lake Bluff he often became so intensely intellectual that the thoughts he uttered, the ideas he advanced, and the conclusions he arrived at, by illustrations, metaphors, problems, analogies, logic and comparisons, flashed like diamonds in the light of the dazzling sun. His arguments were so over-whelmingly grand and convincing at times, that the strongest opponent would have to yield. So close is his reasoning that the closest attention must be given to grasp his ideas and thoughts. He presents food for the most ripened scholar, as well as for the most illiterate. The spiritual element of power in Mr. Cook frequently appeared so prominently that he excited the deepest emotions of the soul. He is a second Luther in boldness and force in defence of truth. He is a giant thinker and a giant reasoner. He must be heard to be appreciated. In all his greatness he is a humble man. May God spare him yet many years for the defence of truth and Christianity.[2]

Another reporter was the Rev. H. H. Rasseiler, professor at North-Western College and for five years its president. Somewhat less dazzled than Bucks, his report is more informative of the content of Cook's lecture

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[1] EM, December 7, 1876, p. 389.

[2] W. H. Bucks, "Joseph Cook," EM, August 2, 1877, p. 241.

at Lake Bluff:

> As the chief attraction and most conspicuous among the large number of distinguished men here collected stands the Rev. Joseph Cook, "the orator of Tremont Temple." . . . He believes in making intellectual power subservient to religious doctrine and evangelical ideas. He believes strongly in nature, and especially in "the nature of things." He has a profound reverence for the Bible, but he does not believe that it either creates or changes the truth. His lectures on "Conscience" and "Certainties in Religion" were simply grand in this, that the lecturer showed so conclusively that religion is not jeopardized by scientific thought, and that it has for its foundation not only the revealed word of its Divine Author, but also the eternal laws of nature.[1]

The next winter Jacob Hartzler of the Messenger gave a glowing report of Cook's appearance and lecture in Cleveland, Ohio.[2] In 1879 his trip to San Francisco was followed in the Messenger.[3] The Telescope took special delight in reporting Cook's visit to Dayton, Ohio, in 1880, where he lectured under the auspices of the YMCA. With a good deal of zest the editor tells of spending an hour with Cook in a private interview.[4] In the next several years the press tracked him to Ireland, where he dined with the Archbishop of Dublin,[5] to Japan, where Jacob Hartzler, new missionary of the Evangelicals, reported that he had given "a crushing reply to materialism,"[6] and on to Australia.[7]

Other accounts came from schools where he lectured. The United Brethren men at Yale Divinity School sent back reports to Dayton on Cook's appearances there. According to the correspondents, he gave a good account of himself both in 1883, and again in 1885 when he spoke in Marquand Chapel

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[1] EM, August 2, 1877, p. 245.
[2] EM, January 24, 1878, p. 4.
[3] EM, July 17, 1879, p. 5.
[4] RT, April 14, 1880, p. 4.
[5] EM, May 10, 1881, p. 5.
[6] EM, June 13, 1882, p. 185. Also see EM, July 11, 1882, p. 217.
[7] EM, November 28, 1882, p. 381.

prior to a question-and-answer period.[1] When he gave some lectures at Lebanon Valley College, the United Brethren school in Annville, Pennsylvania, this editorial flourish announced his coming: "He is the intellectual and moral giant of this age. It is worth a trip of a hundred miles to hear him deliver this wonderful lecture."[2]

The stream of praise was almost unlimited.[3] Even his early home life was of interest to his admirers, and several biographical sketches appeared in the Telescope.[4] Indicative of his widespread appeal is the comment with which the last of his 1884 series of lectures was introduced in the Telescope:

> Like a giant, he has grappled the greatest living issues and questions of the day, and the people have heard him gladly. Evangelical, scientific, strategic, and heroic, his utterances are more widely disseminated than those of any man on this continent. We are glad to have been able to give our readers the product of his fertile mind for these years past.[5]

Once having adopted him, United Brethren defended him against attack and disparagement. On one occasion when critics charged him with being egotistic, J. W. Hott responded by quoting Cook's epigrammatic response to two attempts at flattery.[6] When the liberal church press attacked him for

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[1] RT, March 7, 1883, p. 373; RT, December 16, 1885, pp. 802-803.

[2] RT, January 23, 1884, p. 280.

[3] Cf. EM, April 5, 1877, p. 108; EM, April 19, 1877, p. 124; EM, June 12, 1883, p. 185; RT, March 3, 1886, p. 136; RT, March 25, 1885, p. 193.

[4] RT, October 22, 1879, p. 1; RT, June 6, 1883, p. 586; RT, October 22, 1884, p. 899.

[5] RT, April 9, 1884, p. 456. Cf. the editorial note in EM, February 12, 1889, p. 105.

[6] RT, February 14, 1883, p. 328.

criticizing the new Congregational creed,[1] the Telescope editor replied with this comment on the liberals' reaction to him: "But if this world is the great liberal thing they think it is and Mr. Cook is still in the world, why don't they swallow it down and smile on him?"[2] Another editorial indicates that criticism of Cook from the outside world was mounting:

> We have noticed one or two of our exchanges speaking depreciatingly of the lectures of Cook, while some which formerly gave them do not do so this year. Those who disparage these lectures have evidently not read them. In all the illustrious history of this lectureship more mighty and clearer utterances never were given by it than we publish this week.[3]

Criticism from among Evangelicals and United Brethren was almost non-existent. Only two critical opinions appear in the church periodicals. On one occasion Bishop Weaver challenged his non-Wesleyan doctrine that believers would be made perfect at death.[4] The other was the report by the Rev. E. S. Lorenz that during the time of his study abroad German theology had not appeared nearly as orthodox to him as Joseph Cook had depicted it.[5] Apart from these divergences, the encomiums are uninterrupted.

Cook became far and away the most quoted authority in articles appearing in the church periodicals. Note is taken of his lectures, references are made to his views on various matters, and the words "as Joseph Cook says" become absolutely confirmatory evidence.[6]

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[1]The so-called Commission Creed was prepared in 1883 by twenty-five Congregational representatives to replace the 1865 Burial Hill Declaration and the 1871 Oberlin Declaration (W. A. Curtis, "Confessions," Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, ed. James Hastings, III [1911], 885).

[2]RT, April 16, 1884, p. 472. [3]RT, March 4, 1885, p. 153.

[4]RT, May 7, 1884, p. 513.

[5]Supra, p. 112. RT, January 7, 1885, p. 17.

[6]See EM, August 16, 1877, p. 260; EM, August 30, 1877, p. 277; EM, May 17, 1877, p. 157; EM, September 13, 1877, p. 290; EM, November 1, 1877, p. 348; EM, November 29, 1877, p. 382; GCJUB, 1885, p. 170; RT, June 6, 1877, p. 292; RT, June 10, 1885, p. 370; J. W. Etter, "The

The Telescope scored a major scoop for its subscribers when it carried the full stenographic text of Cook's Boston Monday lectures in 1879. This feature continued through 1886, but after that only excerpts were included.[1] This special attraction became an important asset to the Telescope, for the number of subscribers increased by several thousand when the publication of the lectures was begun.[2] After this initial success the Telescope gave ample publicity when it carried the lectures again, using them as an incentive for renewing subscriptions. This may well be why Cook's general movements received such good publicity and why the editor was so careful to defend him against attack. Cook was too good to lose. It was an obvious motive in 1885, when Cook's lectures were under attack and were no longer carried by some publications. Asserting that these lectures are the best ever, Editor J. W. Hott concludes with this sales pitch: "The thousands of thoughtful homes into which the Telescope goes will find this a strong feature for the next two months. A little effort would also give this pleasure to many other homes."[3]

Why Cook Was Accepted

Why was it that Evangelicals and United Brethren welcomed Joseph Cook so wholeheartedly? The most obvious reason is that he fit perfectly their pattern of engaging in theological activity for defensive purposes. He was the apologist supreme and appeared at just the right time to deal a death

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Existence of God," Christian Doctrine, ed. Bishop Jonathan Weaver (Dayton, Ohio: United Brethren Publishing House, 1894), p. 47.

[1]The Messenger must have been operating on a smaller budget, for it was able to publish only the 1886 series of six lectures which had been copyrighted by the Independent. Apart from this one breakthrough, it had to be content to offer excerpts and summaries of his lectures.

[2]RT, December 10, 1879, p. 4. [3]RT, March 4, 1885, p. 153.

blow to infidelity and heresy. In the same issue of the Messenger that deplored Ingersoll's lecturing on behalf of infidelity, the editor announced his nomination of Joseph Cook to lead the forces of righteousness:

> When God needs a champion to stand for him on the field of battle, he never fails to find one prepared for the place. He has his standing army; the rank and file of his militant host; the chiefs and leaders in the battle and on the march, and also his picked men--chosen instruments for special service. One of the latter is the Rev. Joseph Cook, an intellectual giant, a son of thunder, an earnest and mighty servant of God. He seems to be no less a chosen man for the place he fills, than Moody is for his.[1]

Radiating confidence, the editor reported that "Joseph Cook says that 'a cool recital of facts, authenticated by official documents, is all that is needed now to run a red-hot zig-zag thunderbolt through American infidelity.'"[2] Cook may have underestimated the time needed to complete the job, but Bishop Dubs reported considerable progress in his address at Schuylkill Seminary at Fredericksburg, Pennsylvania, in 1886:

> True intellectual culture acts not only in defence, it is also aggressive. The war must be carried into the enemy's camp. So did Paul, so did Luther and his co-workers, so did Lange, Dorner, Pfaff, and others, so does Christlieb, Ebrard, McCosh, Joseph Cook, and many others. These intellectual giants are battering down the defiant ramparts infidelity has erected in order to assail the Divine truth, and scatter triumphantly with their sledgehammer logic the boasted bulwarks of anti-christian science. . . . The light of truth is dispelling all darkness and doubt. Every legitimate means is made use of to accomplish this result. Newspapers, brochures, monthlies, stately quarterlies and books are teeming with live truths hurled like polished shafts against error and infidelity.[3]

The Telescope pronounced Cook and Dwight L. Moody "true fellowworkers in pulling down the strongholds of infidelity."[4]

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[1] EM, February 22, 1877, p. 60. Cf. EM, August 30, 1877, p. 277; EM, January 24, 1878, p. 4.

[2] EM, January 8, 1880, p. 4.

[3] Bishop Rudolph Dubs, "The Relation of Intellectual Culture to the Promotion of the Christian Religion," EM, September 21, 1886, p. 593.

[4] RT, February 28, 1877, p. 180.

Cook's value appeared at another point. He helped both denominations to meet the challenge of science, thus closing a vulnerable chink in their armor. From Cook's point of view this harmonization of science and religion was his most important task. Anton Huelster understood the implications of Cook's Biology for Christian theology:

> Now Mr. Joseph Cook is a living oracular Cyclopedia--of at least certain departments of natural science and theology. Possessing a giant intellect, an iron will, an all-grasping memory, and an enthusiastic love for truth, he has spent many years of earnest and devoted study on these subjects under peculiar advantages such as few men enjoy. His lectures in Boston bequeath to the world the rich fruit of his ripe scholarship. But he does not speak on his authority alone--no mortal could do that on so many themes of extensive and minutest research; he speaks in the name of established science. What makes this book on Biology so valuable, is not independent original investigation, but the fact that it has behind it the authority of the greatest scientists and philosophers of to-day, yea, even the admissions of the doubters and materialists, of a DeWette, Häckel, Huxley and Tyndall. The results as stated by Mr. Cook can, therefore, be implicitly relied on; there is no learning, no power on earth at present that is able to overthrow them, or that can even call them in question.
>
> This being the case, it is certainly a source of great delight to Christians, to perceive the beautiful harmony existing between established science and the good old book that we have learned to revere from childhood. Mr. Cook is a born apologist, and divinely commissioned to defend the glorious doctrines of Christian theology against the savage attacks of skepticism and infidelity. This present book shows conclusively the unanimity existing between the best of science and the Bible as regards the great problem of life; science does not teach that life is the result of organization, but rather that, ultimately, organization is dependent on an immaterial principle, which we call the soul, and which, since it was before the organization, may and can exist independently after the bodily organization has returned to dust. Just think of it, here you have the conclusive proof, that physical science teaches (as far as it can) the immortality of the soul![1]

The Youmans brothers were not so congratulatory in their review of the book in the Popular Science Monthly. They disparaged Cook's knowledge of science and concluded that their "orthodox friends" were "rather hard pressed for championship."[2]

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[1]Anton Huelster, Review of Biology, by Joseph Cook, EM, December 6, 1877, p. 389.

[2]Popular Science Monthly, XII (February, 1878), 501.

Apparently the Rev. S. P. Spreng did not read Popular Science Monthly. In his two articles on "Science and the Bible" in 1880 Spreng objects to those who slavishly follow science, no matter what it does to Scripture. For this reason he sees the conflict between science and the Bible continuing, but without justification. Emboldened by his knowledge of Cook, Spreng protests that

> there is springing up a class of theologians, who seem to think it absolutely necessary to force the Bible to adapt itself to every newly projected theory of science. They have lowered the standard of inspiration. They have forced all sorts of absurd interpretations upon it. They concede too much, and are too easily alarmed. They placidly and gracefully yield to every fresh demand of popular science, and make quite an exhibition of logical suppleness, by the somersaults they turn to accommodate the godless scientist who pulls the wires. They set themselves to work with an industry worthy of a better cause, to patch upon the Bible an interpretation that will harmonize with the latest demand of science, and in their zeal in this direction, they fail to harmonize their interpretation of the Bible with the Bible itself. It harmonizes with science beautifully, though! Grant that the commonly received interpretations of Scripture have not always been correct; grant that we have made mistakes and have misunderstood and misinterpreted the Bible--is that any impeachment of that Bible itself? . . . Is that free investigation which throws the Bible under the microscope of science, but forbids us to place science under the calcium light of revelation? For a man who deals fairly with this theme, commend me to Joseph Cook. He endeavors to show how all true science harmonizes with the Bible, and how science and the Bible mutually assist in explaining each other. He is not alone. . . . And it is very significant that these men, who revere the Bible and receive the kingdom of God as little children,--humble in their greatness--are the pioneers of scientific investigation, and the most reliable authorities on scientific subjects.[1]

Furthermore, Cook was already providing comfort with regard to the new Darwinian theories:

> What of evolution? Is it Scriptural? The question is premature. It must first be proven to be scientific. . . . Revelation has long since shown that everything is linked to God. Evolution has come upon the scene to show that the chains do not exist, while unawares he himself has become shackled and kicks in vain against the fetters. For, as Joseph Cook says,--on the fundamental principle that every effect must have an adequate cause,--"We cannot have evolution unless we have an evolver!" . . . While many have supposed science to be an invention of

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[1]S. P. Spreng, "Science and the Bible," EM, June 8, 1880, p. 1.

> the devil to prove the Bible false, it is destined to furnish the strongest evidence that can be had for the supernatural authorship of the Bible.[1]

What particularly caught Joseph Cook's fancy in the realm of "science" was Professor J. K. F. Zoellner's "transcendental physics" which Cook thought anticipated "the second birth of German science and its thorough Christianization" because of its refutation of materialism.[2] Although he admits he has not studied Zoellner's theories thoroughly, he cannot restrain himself from speculating upon the possible results if transcendental physics should be verified. After setting forth the principles which he thinks this view[3] would entail, Cook concludes with this delirious peroration:

> If science goes on repeating psychical experiments, if it prove over and over that things are done that no human will ever by the aid of the psychic force can do, it will force all candid men to adopt transcendental physics as their philosophy. In adopting this new view, however, you would only adopt the biblical view of the world, and you would find yourselves invincible in defending miracles, prophecy, and inspiration against materialism. I believe you are invincible now, without the aid of transcendental physics, but you would be reenforced to a certain degree by the decisive support which the new philosophy brings to the most contested points of the biblical history and psychology.[4]

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[1] Ibid., June 15, 1880, p. 1. It seems that Cook accepted a version of evolution and applied it to various aspects of Christian doctrine. In one of his later lectures it makes its way into his Christology, for he invokes the "law of the ascent of life" to justify his claim that natural theology should be christocentric (RT, April 9, 1884, p. 458).

[2] RT, March 17, 1880, pp. 2-3. Johann Karl Friedrich Zöllner (1834-1882) was a German physicist and astronomer who dabbled in spiritualism. His high reputation in science was well-earned for he made improvements in the spectroscope and constructed an astrophotometer to measure stellar magnitudes. His extra-scientific efforts to explain spiritualistic phenomena by means of a fourth-dimensional concept of space are found in his Transcendental Physics, trans. Charles Carlton Massey (Boston: Colby and Rich, 1881). See Zöllner, Johann Karl Friedrich," Webster's Biographical Dictionary (Springfield, Massachusetts: G. and C. Merriam Co., 1951) pp. 1619-20.

[3] "Transcendental physics" apparently was a variety of absolute idealism and stressed the affinity of man with supernatural beings or powers.

[4] RT, March 24, 1880, p. 3. Dr. George Beard, a physician who was a life-long friend of Cook, but an unbeliever in the Christian faith, points

Scientists may have paid little attention to Cook and his theories, but churchmen manifestly appreciated his work. Bishop Hanby commended Cook for his work in "Christian science."[1] The Rev. A. B. Sherk voiced the sentiment of his fellow ministers when he wrote:

> Where are the men who have done nobler or more valiant service for science than Dr. McCosh and Joseph Cook? With giant strength they have wrested science from infidel grasp and shown it to be the handmaid of Christianity. The Christian world owes a debt of gratitude to these champions of the truth that it will hardly ever be able to pay.[2]

One advantage of being on the Cook bandwagon grew out of the increasing tendency among Evangelicals and United Brethren to regard philosophy and theology as essentially compatible. F. P. Sanders recognized this in his address on the occasion of his graduation from Union Biblical Seminary in 1878 when he said of theology and philosophy that

> the two may be reconciled. They are not at variance, but make a grand unity. In Rev. J. Cook the two are seen to be reconciled. They walk hand in hand. One gives illustrations to the other. We should be grateful that philosophy enables us to explain the glorious power and goodness of God.[3]

Furthermore, Cook had the correct views on conversion. In fact, he was prepared to call the new birth "a scientific necessity."[4] This he

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out that his friend's contribution in the field of the relation of religion and science lay in his being "the first among religious apologists to recognize that the battleground of religion and science is in the brain and nervous system." Furthermore, Cook wanted "to scientifically prove religion," thus going beyond Butler and Paley, who had only attempted to show probability (RT, June 6, 1883, p. 586).

[1]H. A. Thompson, Our Bishops (Dayton, Ohio: United Brethren Publishing House, 1906), p. 359.

[2]A. B. Sherk, "Ministerial Culture--No. 2," RT, August 6, 1884, p. 722.

[3]RT, May 15, 1878, p. 269.

[4]EM, May 24, 1877, p. 164; EM, July 26, 1877, p. 237; Joseph Cook, "The New Birth a Scientific Necessity," RT, December 17, 1879, pp. 2-3; RT, February 20, 1884, pp. 347-48; RT, March 17, 1886, p. 171.

linked with a proper appreciation of revivals.[1]

In the face of threatening new trends in theology originating in Germany Cook reassured his followers about the essential harmlessness of most German theology. Both denominations had long feared "German Rationalism" and its harmful effects. Along came Cook to assure them that German theology had reformed and was now on the side of the angels. True, there were deviations and heretical tendencies here and there, but a man no longer need fear them with a reliable guide like Cook to provide a map showing the highways to take and the detours to avoid. He could remove the fangs of a man like Dorner and present the rest of him as a safe and wise guide in theology.[2]

An issue which demonstrates the ambivalent effect which Cook was to have on Evangelicals and United Brethren was that of the inspiration of the Bible. Very vigorously he protested against what he called Dorner's (and Newman Smyth's) "liberalistic mysticism." He objected to making the "Christian consciousness" the final test of truth, for it cannot tell us anything

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[1]Joseph Cook, "Revivals True and False," EM, March 20, 1883, pp. 89-90.

[2]Cook warned against the errors of Dorner on eschatology because the latter extended probation beyond death, noting that Christlieb did not agree with Dorner. In fact, Cook is willing to venture the opinion that "it is safe to accord with Andover and Boston in the proposition that a man who definitely champions Dorner's theology is not precisely the person to teach our young men theological science" (RT, January 24, 1883, p. 283). Yet he had many kind words to say about Dorner elsewhere and actually recommended his theology highly on some issues (Joseph Cook, "Dorner's Eschatology," RT, May 9, 1883, pp. 522-23); RT, March 11, 1885, p. 171. Cook's Chautauqua lecture refuting Canon Farrar's belief that it is possible to repent after death was a bulwark for the orthodox at a time when Henry Ward Beecher's announcement that he did not believe in eternal punishment was being widely publicized.(EM, August 22, 1878, p. 4). See EM, February 28, 1878, pp. 4-5, for a three-column extract of Cook's sermon on Eternal Punishment given on February 10th in Tremont Temple; a note about Cook on the uncertainty of repentance after death in EM, April 4, 1878, p. 4; a two-column editorial on "Does Death End Probation?" is an account of Cook's Prelude to his second Boston Monday Lecture of the current season (EM, January 30, 1883, p. 36); RT, March 17, 1886, p. 171.

about the Trinity; the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; or the fall of man in the Garden of Eden.[1] With scorn he contends that "the attempt to force Schleiermacher's principles in Dorner's name upon circles well-informed in recent church-history, or in love with a reverent biblical theology and clear ideas, is reactionary in a degree as audacious as it is unscholarly and mischievous."[2] Referring critically to Luther's criticism of the Epistle of James, he points out Lutheranism's "reputation for two centuries for browbeating and twisting scripture so as to make the external standard of authority conform to the inner standard of Christian consciousness."[3] The new Congregational creed is not acceptable to Cook because it does not affirm that the Scriptures are the only standard by which faith and conduct may be judged, because it does not use the word "inspired" in describing the Bible, and because it does not declare the Scriptures an infallible guide in faith and conduct.[4] Cook was quite confident that "if we can prove any part of the Bible inspired, we can prove the whole of it so,"[5] discounting the accusation of bibliolatry as coming from Paulus's "outgrown school of rationalism."[6]

On the other hand, Cook rendered the whole movement of higher criticism of the Bible palatable and safe in one fell swoop in his lecture which answered the question: "Were the first and fourth gospels, respectively, written by Matthew and John, or are some portions thereof mere accretions of tradition?" Cook pronounced the judgment that

> Professor Luthardt, of Leipzig, says, most justly: "Our faith does not depend on the decision of the question whether the gospel according to

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[1] RT, April 9, 1884, p. 459. [2] RT, May 9, 1883, p. 522. [3] Ibid.

[4] RT, April 2, 1884, pp. 442-43. Supra, pp. 156-157.

[5] RT, February 29, 1888, p. 138. [6] RT, March 4, 1885, p. 156.

about the Trinity; the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; or the fall of man in the Garden of Eden.[1] With scorn he contends that "the attempt to force Schleiermacher's principles in Dorner's name upon circles well-informed in recent church-history, or in love with a reverent biblical theology and clear ideas, is reactionary in a degree as audacious as it is unscholarly and mischievous."[2] Referring critically to Luther's criticism of the Epistle of James, he points out Lutheranism's "reputation for two centuries for browbeating and twisting scripture so as to make the external standard of authority conform to the inner standard of Christian consciousness."[3] The new Congregational creed is not acceptable to Cook because it does not affirm that the Scriptures are the only standard by which faith and conduct may be judged, because it does not use the word "inspired" in describing the Bible, and because it does not declare the Scriptures an infallible guide in faith and conduct.[4] Cook was quite confident that "if we can prove any part of the Bible inspired, we can prove the whole of it so,"[5] discounting the accusation of bibliolatry as coming from Paulus's "outgrown school of rationalism."[6]

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[4] RT, April 2, 1884, pp. 442-43. Supra, pp. 156-157.

[5] RT, February 29, 1888, p. 138. [6] RT, March 4, 1885, p. 156.

> St. Matthew, in the form in which we possess it, is the work of St. Matthew himself. I believe that it is so; but it would not in the slightest degree affect my faith if I were forced to yield to the conviction that the earlier sketch made by the apostle had been enlarged by additional narratives of events in the life of Christ by some other witness of the apostolic era."[1]

Cook opposed Wellhausen's attack on Mosaic authorship, but admitted that Moses may well have been the author of only part of the Pentateuch.[2] Thus, Joseph Cook provided a way of escape from the biblicism which characterized the theology of most people of both denominations.[3]

With regard to the moral problems of the day Cook was, as usual, on the right side. His interests covered numerous topics, all the way from advising theological students to take time to attend prayer meetings to his vigorous support of the temperance movement.[4] He also made pronouncements on abortion and on the evils of Mormonism because of its destruction of Christian family life.[5]

Another important element of Cook's point of view was his philosophical grounding of the doctrine of the personality of God. Hitherto, natural theology was impotent here and had to give way to revelation. Now, thanks to Lotze and Cook, philosophical support undergirded this teaching of revelation.[6]

Cook proclaimed his message within a context containing several

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[1] RT, February 24, 1886, p. 122. [2] RT, February 7, 1883, p. 315.

[3] This declaration about the authorship of the Gospels appeared only in the journal of the United Brethren; Cook had greater influence on them than on Evangelicals.

[4] RT, January 23, 1884, p. 280; EM, March 14, 1878, p. 4; EM, February 27, 1883, pp. 65-66; EM, March 18, 1890, p. 169.

[5] EM, March 7, 1878, p. 5; EM, September 4, 1879, p. 4; EM, March 4, 1890, p. 137.

[6] RT, March 5, 1884, p. 379; RT, April 2, 1884, pp. 443-44.

factors which enhanced its acceptability. One was his chauvinism, which delighted his hearers. An exuberant example comes from a speech delivered in Cleveland in 1883:

> How large is Lake Superior? Large enough in which to sink Scotland. In Texas you could bury the German Empire. Every American President rules over more square miles than any Caesar, and dispenses more patronage than any Roman Emperor. In comparison with the Federal patronage in the hands of our President, Caesar only had marbles to play with.[1]

Another element was the tremendous assurance he conveyed to his audiences. Allegedly, "he always spoke in an oracular manner that carried conviction."[2] Both the content and manner of his addresses conveyed this impression. He could talk about conscience as "the voice of God"[3] and use overwhelming eloquence to declare it.[4]

The Position of Cook

What was the theological and philosophical position of Joseph Cook, this man who dominated the theological stage for Evangelicals and United Brethren during the late 1870's and the 1880's? A complete answer to that question would go far beyond the scope of this paper, but it is possible to indicate some of the leading ideas which Evangelicals and United Brethren came to know.

One way of analyzing his theology would be to note which men he favored and which he disliked, for he expressed his opinions freely and

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[1] EM, April 10, 1883, p. 116. [2] Weisenburger, p. 71.

[3] J. W. Etter, "The Existence of God," Christian Doctrine, ed. Bishop Jonathan Weaver, p. 57.

[4] This thumbnail description of lifeless churches is a sample of his style: "A hammock attached on one side to the Cross, and on the other held and swung to and fro by the forefinger of Mammon, its freight of nominal Christians elegantly moaning meanwhile over the evils of the times, and not at ease unless fanned by eloquence and music, and sprinkled by social adulations into perfumed, unheroic slumber" (EM, June 7, 1877, p. 180).

definitely. However, this is not very helpful, for he had good words for a great variety of men: from Luther and Melanchthon to Butler and Paley and on through Leibniz, Kant, and Jonathan Edwards to such diverse figures as Bushnell, Lotze, Bowne, Christlieb, Weiss, Edersheim, McCosh, Nathaniel Taylor, Henry B. Smith, Henry Drummond, Edgar A. Park, Samuel Harris, and George Park Fisher. His blacklist did not extend far beyond Spencer, Huxley, Tyndall, Theodore Parker, Ritschl, and Renan, although he was very critical of some aspects of Schleiermacher and Dorner and their followers in the United States.

Perhaps the best way to describe his viewpoint is to say it was a compound of Scottish Philosophy modified by what he liked of Lotze's Personalism (he did not like his rejection of matter) and sprinkled with scientific ideas that supported his almost disdainful rejection of materialism. His strong emphasis on self-evident truths, which are the result of rational intuitions, reveals his affinity with Scottish Philosophy.[1] This is why he criticized Dorner so strongly. "Christian consciousness" can never be the ultimate test of certainty; "there is nothing in man except the intuitions, strictly so-called, or the faculties by which we perceive truths, absolutely self-evident, necessary, and universal, that can be safely used as a final test of truth."[2] Acknowledging his indebtedness to McCosh and Samuel Harris, Cook explained what he meant by self-evident truths.

> [They] are the intuitions, strictly so-called. They are the basis of intuitional theology. They are axioms. They are the foundation of what I have called axiomatic theology.
>
> What are the marks of intuitive truth? Five--self-evidence, necessity, universality, persistence, consistency.
>
> It is impossible to imagine the opposite of a self-evident truth.

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[1] RT, April 11, 1888, p. 234. [2] RT, May 9, 1883, p. 522.

> The chief trait of axiomatic truth is the inconceivability of the contrary.[1]

Calling attention to the distinction between evidence and self-evidence, he argued that Theodore Parker confused intuition and instinct. Strictly speaking, we know by instinct, not intuition, that there is a God. But only intuitions can give us self-evident truth, and we have no intuition of the divine existence. Cook wanted to guard against putting too much into intuitions, for he wanted to maintain their scientific nature as self-evident truths.[2] He believed, like Samuel Harris, in direct knowledge of God, but he did not believe that he could build a "scientific proof" of God upon it, and this he thought was the demand of the day.

This effort to build a scientific theology gave impetus to his concern for Christian evidences.[3] When asked for a recommendation, he declared that the three or four best books on the subject were Harris's The Scientific Basis of Theism, George P. Fisher's The Grounds of Theistic and Christian Belief, Drummond's Natural Law in the Spiritual World, and the biography of Professor Clerk Maxwell of England.[4] On another occasion he commended Prebendary Bow's Bampton Lectures of 1877, Fisher's Essays on the Supernatural Origin of Christianity, Canon Liddon's lectures on The Divinity of Our Lord, Bushnell's Nature and the Supernatural, and the lives of Christ by Weiss and Edersheim.[5] What exhilarated Cook was his impression that

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[1] RT, February 27, 1884, p. 363.

[2] Ibid. See also Joseph Cook, "What Shall Be the New Theology?" RT, March 5, 1884, pp. 379-80; RT, April 9, 1884, p. 459.

[3] See Joseph Cook, "Deficiencies of Emerson's and Channing's Systems of Thought," RT, December 31, 1879, p. 2.

[4] RT, February 27, 1884, p. 363.

[5] RT, March 12, 1884, p. 395.

natural theology, following the method of examining Christian evidences, was on the verge of a breakthrough:

> In the progress of religious thought we are on the eve of reaping a vast harvest in the field of natural theology. . . . It will not be said that natural law governs the universe; it will be said that a personal God is omnipresent in all the affairs of nature. The divine transcendence and the divine immanence will both be emphasized; and so we shall avoid pantheism on the one hand, and a merely mechanical theism on the other.[1]

Following the Common-Sense principle of the absolute certainty, necessity and universality of the law of causation,[2] Cook utilized some of Lotze's thought as a way of extending the "achieved results" of natural theology. In doing so, he thought the following inferences could then be made:

> 8. The supreme question of philosophy has been as to the personality of the ultimate force of the absolute Being.
> 9. One step of progress in natural theology in our time has been the complete overthrow of the subtlest modern materialistic definition of matter. . . .
> . . . . . .
> 13. Our intuitions of the good and the right, as well as of the true and the beautiful, if they have been developed by hereditary descent, must have resulted from impressions continually made on the race by the eternal power not ourselves that makes for righteousness. We feel that power now. But all that is in it now must have been in it from the first. Therefore, what our intuitions and instincts tell us now can not be impeached. . . .
> 14. The familiar argument from the moral instincts of conscience as to the existence of God and the certainty of judgment to come remains unassailable.
> 15. The argument from causation in proof of the personality of the first cause remains in full force.
> 16. The argument from design, or preconformity to a future event, has all its force. . . .
> 17. There is, therefore, in the universe thought not our own.
> 18. But there can not be thought without a thinker.
> 19. A thinker is a person.
> 20. There is, therefore, in the universe not an eternal somewhat

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[1] RT, February 27, 1884, p. 363.

[2] Cook was confident that "there is in man a definite faculty for the apprehension of the connection of cause and effect, and so we have a right to be certain that cause and effect exist in the external world" (RT, January 14, 1880, p. 3).

> merely which makes for righteousness, but an eternal some One, who makes for righteousness and from whom, forever and forever, we can not escape.
>
> If matter will not explain the universe, then the universe must be explained by mind.[1]

Cook called his position "scientific supernaturalism."[2] He advised that theologians would have to take into account "the alleged existence of modern evidence of the supernatural" in developing any new theology.[3]

In his attempt to come to terms with science Cook understood correctly his contemporaries' anxiety about the new biological theories and what they might mean for religion. Evangelicals, United Brethren, and many other conservative Christians could not accept the liberalism of a theology like Ritschl's which attempted to outflank science. Not only was Ritschlianism theologically unpalatable, but it violated the philosophical principles they had come to appreciate and believe in. Joseph Cook stepped into this gap and supplied the resources with which they could reconcile science and religion. While agreeing with them on major principles and providing "safe" and "right" answers in problem areas, he also stretched their minds and exposed them to a much larger theological world. He embodied their tradition of engaging in theological activity for defense of the faith. But at the same time Joseph Cook did far more than that. He was deeply concerned to build bridges between Christian doctrine and the best thought of his time. He was involved in a reinterpretation (of sorts) of the Christian faith, and this was something Evangelicals and United Brethren had not done before. They had been occupied with defending their pietism and its alliance with orthodoxy. After Joseph Cook the role of theology could not be the same.

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[1] RT, March 5, 1884, p. 379. [2] EM, June 12, 1883, p. 185.

[3] RT, February 20, 1884, p. 347. He explains how "natural supernaturalism" is transformed into "ethical supernaturalism" in RT, March 5, 1884, p. 380.

IX. SCIENCE, SCHOLARSHIP AND SCRIPTURE

One response to Cook was to emulate him in his clear-cut denunciations of the liberal theology emerging in the seventies and eighties. S. P. Spreng, who later became the editor of the Messenger, called liberalism a more dangerous foe than "open Infidelity, because it wears the mantle of religiousness."[1] The doctrine of probation after death, which was diametrically opposed to the Evangelicals' reason for being, was one example of the evil foreshadowed by the rise of liberalism,[2] according to Spreng. When liberals opposed a law prohibiting circulation of obscene literature through the mails, it was difficult for people with a pietistic heritage not to react to liberalism in theology with revulsion.[3]

Other leaders condemned the foe for reasons which sound persuasive today. B. J. Smoyer saw that a tendency of liberalism was "world-conformity;" it substituted "the voice of the people for the voice of God."[4] D. B. Byers objected to the subordination of revelation to reason which he saw in some Biblical criticism and to the substitution of the "Christian Consciousness" for the Bible as the ultimate test of truth. Nor did he like the weak

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[1] S. P. Spreng, "Liberalism Versus Orthodoxy," EM, January 25, 1881, p. 1.

[2] S. P. Spreng, "Probation After Death," EM, September 13, 1887, pp. 577-78. Cf. W. H. Bucks, "Looseness in Theology," EM, June 10, 1884, p. 185.

[3] J. W. Hott, "Weakness of Free Religion," RT, February 1, 1882, p. 296.

[4] EM, June 14, 1881, p. 1.

view of sin as just a mistake or an error. Liberals also attenuated the doctrine of atonement. In their doctrine of the immanence of God Byers saw just "a modernized, somewhat refined form of Pantheism."[1]

The defensive reaction of Evangelicals and United Brethren to the liberal theology of the late nineteenth century is hardly surprising. There was a good deal to react against. In many ways Professor Franz Delitzsch was right about "the deep gulf between the Old Theology and the New."[2] To expect men who have only recently become acquainted with the outside theological world to enter into creative discussion with representatives of a point of view which constituted a radical change from the doctrines of historic Christianity would be asking a great deal. How different their reaction might have been had the theological mood of twentieth-century Neo-Orthodoxy prevailed at the time when Evangelicals and United Brethren emerged from their cocoons. Even so, they displayed a surprising amount of openness to new ideas and a desire to express the faith in new thought forms.[3]

Attitudes toward Scripture

Prior to Joseph Cook Evangelicals and United Brethren held almost unanimously to a position of literalistic biblicism. Both denominations began their seminaries in this spirit. They fully intended to establish institutions for study of the Bible. This study was intended to include a use of Hebrew and Greek, but certainly not the insights or approach of

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[1] D. B. Byers, "The New Theology," EM, October 26, 1886, pp. 673-74; ibid., November 2, 1886, pp. 690-91.

[2] EM, June 3, 1890, p. 338.

[3] One sign of openness was the appearance of a sermon by Washington Gladden in the Telescope in 1887; later that year he spoke at the commencement of Union Biblical Seminary (RT, January 19, 1887, pp. 42-43; RT, May 11, 1887, p. 296).

higher criticism. After the exposure to German theology, however, the picture changed and a considerable diversity of views arose. Many remained defensive against any scholarly approach to the Bible, but others adopted much more liberal views, in part at least because Cook assured them that higher criticism was harmless to their faith if properly pursued. Among the Evangelicals Anton Huelster helped to advance this tendency in his address at the formal opening of Union Biblical Institute:

> Words are too meager a vehicle for the real essence of revelation; they can only be an indication, a portraiture, giving us a picture, as it were, of revelation. Revelation does not consist even in the words of the Bible as such, but in the mighty deeds which meet our gaze in the world around us, and of which man himself is the grandest exemplification. Especially is the wonder-working hand of God visible in the developments of human history, though the even flow of history was interrupted by sin, forced out of its proper course and thrown into utter confusion, nevertheless God's wisdom has so directed its movements that it is all tending around one grand center--the God-Man Christ Jesus, and to the realization of one consummate end--the glory of God and the well-being of mankind. Now of these great deeds of God the Bible is the authoritative record-book; of this all-comprehensive revelation of the Most High it is the only and true portraiture.[1]

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[1] EM, September 13, 1877, pp. 289-90. In a series of articles in the Messenger on "The Relation of Science to Religion" Huelster mentions the disputed genuineness of II Peter and the problem of whether or not the sun stood still for Joshua, but does not feel that these affect the God-manhood of Christ, which is central for Christianity. With regard to the sun standing still he advises:

> "If the literal interpretation is too contradictory of the known laws of nature, to be worthy of acceptance, why not adopt the poetical interpretation, which by the way does full justice to the sacred text? The Lord so prospered the Israelites, that the work of two days was performed in one, would be the short and very significant meaning. It is unwise, everywhere, to introduce the miraculous element unnecessarily. The God-manhood of Christ established, and the highest interests of religion are fully satisfied. Of course, it will then follow that he can work miracles whenever the cause of religion compels, and that he should not have wrought any at all would, it must be confessed, seem unnatural" (EM, November 8, 1881, p. 2).

Cf. H. B. Hartzler's comment, on taking over the editorship of the Messenger, that he believes in the "Scriptural development theory" (EM, November 6, 1879, p. 4). Huelster's views, which he probably learned at Tübingen, may explain why he taught only briefly at Union Biblical Institute, the Evangelicals' new theological school. Professor William Heinmiller recalls from his life as a youth in Reutlingen (in the late eighties) that students and faculty at the Evangelicals' seminary there

Another liberal voice was that of Solomon J. Gamertsfelder, assistant editor of the Messenger and later professor of systematic theology at Union Biblical Institute at Naperville, Illinois. In the summer of 1889 his report from Chautauqua on William Rainey Harper's address on "A Bible Reading on Joel" showed that he approved of the literary and historical criticism which Harper employed.[1] When the Methodist Review attacked Harper, accusing him of "being the Jupiter of the rationalistic movement in this country," the Messenger came to his defense:

> We are glad to learn that many of our leading Christian periodicals do not share the opinion of Dr. Mendenhall in his unfounded criticism. We are at a loss to know how any one familiar with Dr. Harper's method of expounding the Scriptures in public Bible readings and in class, can favor such sweeping charges against him.[2]

The Messenger quietly expressed approval of this statement which Harper made in his own defense:

> I believe in applying to the Bible the principles of literary criticism, to determine when its books were written, and the particular purpose for which they were written. It might be that those who try to destroy the force of the evidence of the validity of the Bible employ the same methods. But the results are wholly different. The object of Wellhausen and his school is to disprove the supernatural element; ours is to prove it. Inquiry doesn't imply a doubt in the divine origin of the Bible. It simply implies a desire for knowledge in relation to the human circumstances connected with that origin. For example, Isaiah prophesied for over forty years in connection with two or three political situations. Literary criticism tries to find out what sermons were delivered in connection with each of these political crises, in order that the thought and contents of that sermon may be better understood; and if that in any way implies a denial of their supernatural origin, I confess I am unable to see it.[3]

(begun in 1877) did not look with favor upon Tübingen theology (Personal interview with William Heinmiller, November 14, 1965).

[1] EM, July 16, 1889, p. 456.

[2] "Dr. W. R. Harper's Defence," EM, August 13, 1889, p. 521. Gamertsfelder probably is the one who defended Harper; one can hardly imagine S. P. Spreng, the editor, doing so.

[3] Ibid.

In one of the most liberal expressions of attitude towards Scripture the writer (probably Gamertsfelder) acknowledges that revelation in the Bible is progressive:

> Biblical revelation must be adapted to the ability of man to comprehend it. The teacher adapts himself in reference to both method and subject-matter to the capacity of his pupil. So the infinite Jehovah chooses to limit himself to methods best adapted to the finite mind of man, and communicates himself only in such a degree as man in his limited power is able to endure. The characteristics of biblical revelation are determined principally by the nature and limited power of the recipient subjects.
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> In the revelation of His Word, God observed the law of a gradual historical development. He did not give unto us at once a completed revelation. . . . There is also a gradual development of the subject-matter in divine revelation. . . . The development of revelation kept pace with the historical development of the human race.
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> The historical connection of the successive steps of divine revelation is obvious. Each revelation, after the beginning, is based upon that which preceded, and is made in turn the foundation of other divine manifestations. . . .
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> The fact that divine revelation, as recorded in the Bible, is connected with the contemporaneous history of the foremost nations of the world is a matter of great importance to the Christian world to-day. We may trace the handwriting of God in the antiquities of other nations besides the Hebrews, and find valuable corroborating testimony to the evidences of divine revelation.
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> In this progressive age, when science, falsely so-called, arrays itself against Christianity, and when Higher Criticism plays such an important role in the hands of skeptics, it affords us no little relief to meet the former with testimony in our favor from their own fields of research, and employ the latter as a weapon in our own defense. Since biblical revelation is interwoven with the history of the world, it has left its traces in the ages that are past. Through the gradual development of revelation and its historical connection there is left a vast and promising field of research for the student of the Word.[1]

Liberal and conservative thought existed alongside each other. In an adult education venture in 1884-85 the Evangelicals published a series of books to provide guidance for Sunday School teachers. In the volume which dealt with the inspiration and interpretation of the Bible Anton Huelster contributed an article in which he set forth the interpretive principle that one must observe the law of relative values, for all parts of the Bible

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[1] "Characteristics of Biblical Revelation," EM, February 25, 1890, p. 120.

are not equally important: "Who could for a moment seriously compare and call equally valuable, John 3:16 and a genealogical verse in Chronicles?"[1] In the same volume, however, Reuben Yeakel contends that even the genealogical records of Chronicles are as inspired as any other part of the Bible, although he does not favor a dictation theory of inspiration: "The writers were not machines, but living, active human beings; they were not like pipes through which the water that is poured into them is again discharged, untouched and unchanged."[2] In a third article in the same book the Rev. W. H. Bucks uses traditional arguments (quoting Bishop Butler) to prove the authenticity of the Bible. Relying on the testimony of the authors, the miracles, the prophecies, and the "wonderful preservation of the Scriptures" to prove their authenticity, he argues that "if the miracles are untrue, the teachings based upon them are untrustworthy."[3] Even stronger was the conviction of a layman of the church who frequently contributed to the Messenger, Dr. A. P. Dutcher, that "the Bible has the same authority, and is entitled to the same reverence, as though it had been written in heaven by the finger of God, and had been brought down in sight of men and delivered to the world."[4]

Resistance to Biblical criticism remained widespread among Evangelicals. U. Killinger rejoiced at what he regarded as a failure to disprove Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch,[5] and "destructive criticism" was

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[1]Anton Huelster, "Bible Interpretation," The Divine Origin of the Bible, ed. P. W. Raidabaugh (Cleveland, Ohio: Publishing House of the Evangelical Association, Lauer and Yost, Agents, 1885), pp. 48-49.

[2]Reuben Yeakel, "The Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures," The Divine Origin of the Bible, ed. P. W. Raidabaugh, p. 22.

[3]W. H. Bucks, "The Authenticity of the Scriptures," The Divine Origin of the Bible, ed. P. W. Raidabaugh, pp. 34ff.

[4]EM, October 19, 1880, p. 1. [5]EM, March 27, 1883, p. 97.

condemned by S. P. Spreng and S. C. Breyfogel, both of whom later became bishops.[1] In the controversy between J. W. Mendenhall of the Methodist Review and William Rainey Harper over the method of criticism,[2] Gamertsfelder did not have it all his own way. The Rev. J. B. Kanaga contended that Mendenhall was more than a match for all "the formidable array of advocates of latent or avowed American rationalism:"

> We await further developments with hopeful anticipations of the final results; and thank God that steadfastly conservative orthodoxy has a champion against the common opposition worthy the cause. While truth is eternal and indestructible, it is nevertheless stimulating to observe the spirit and methods of this modern Gamaliel who will not allow error even a temporary advantage.[3]

United Brethren likewise displayed ardent disapproval of the new critical methods of Biblical study. J. Hoke, a prominent layman, was better acquainted with higher criticism than some other opponents of it, for he knew enough to condemn such interpretive principles as "admitting the inspiration of the original and denying it in the translation, . . . making a distinction between the epistles written by the apostles and the gospels which contain the words of the Son of God," and "making a difference between those parts of the Scriptures, which may be called mandatory, or authoritative and binding, and those which are supposed to be but

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[1] S. P. Spreng, "Fictitious Theology," EM, December 11, 1888, p. 792; S. C. Breyfogel, "Address to the United Brethren General Conference," EM, June 11, 1889, p. 377.

[2] Supra, p. 175.

[3] J. B. Kanaga, "American Rationalism," EM, November 5, 1889, p. 705. In the same issue the editor (probably Spreng) expressed his belief that there is a personal devil, for he was convinced that a literal interpretation of the book of Job and of the Gospels could lead to no other conclusion. Apparently there was some difference of opinion between the editor and the assistant editor, for despite Gamertsfelder's espousal of Harper's cause, the Messenger carried excerpts of Mendenhall's attacks on higher criticism (EM, August 12, 1890, p. 498).

advisory and unauthoritative."[1] In an editorial written just before he was elected bishop, J. W. Hott deplored the abandonment of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and warned against criticism which forces Biblical interpretation to fit a particular philosophic theory.[2]

Although conservative sentiment remained strong, United Brethren exhibit the same mixed feelings about Biblical scholarship that characterized Evangelicals. In the very editorial in which he warned against Biblical criticism J. W. Hott also insisted that "there is an interpretation of the Bible which exalts it and elevates, and that not inconsistent with the broadest views of higher criticism."[3] He recognized the tendency toward a broader interpretation of the Bible. In accordance with the attempt to be scientific in Bible interpretation, he stated that he could not now accept the teaching that hell was composed of fire, since it was obvious that an immaterial or spiritual being cannot be hurt by literal burning.[4] Another sign of openness to new Biblical scholarship was the recognition of the derivative nature of the Bible. Men began to see that it depended for its existence upon the life of the church, both in the early years and

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[1] J. Hoke, "Modern Skepticism and the Word of God," RT, August 3, 1881, p. 706. E. S. Lorenz warned his colleagues against German theology, which Joseph Cook had made to appear so orthodox. In his study abroad Lorenz found the treatment of the Scriptures "exceedingly free," with the Song of Solomon being described as a marriage-ode and the book of Daniel as being given a Maccabean date (Supra, p. 157). Lorenz's conservative sentiment was echoed by H. Eby, who affirmed his belief in the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch (RT, September 14, 1887, p. 578).

[2] J. W. Hott, "Danger of Modern Tendencies in Christianity," RT, February 27, 1889, p. 129.

[3] Ibid.

[4] J. W. Hott, "Doctrinal Tendency of Christianity in our Times," RT, January 30, 1889, p. 65.

throughout the centuries.[1] A front-page editorial note in the Telescope in 1890 approved of Franz Delitzsch's view that the Bible "is not a product of absolute authorship on the part of God, but is a body of writings in the production of which the God of revelation made use of men of the most varied types and times and conditions; a book, then, which is not less human than it is divine, in which the human side is sometimes more prominent than the divine, and the divine sometimes more prominent than the human."[2]

Bishop E. B. Kephart's liberal views are evident in his contribution to a collection of essays on Christian doctrine. He distinguishes his "essential" theory of the inspiration of Scripture from the dictation theory, the dynamical theory and the divine illumination theory. According to the "essential" theory, it is proper to say that "the Bible contains the Word of God," inspiration being confined to matters of doctrine, morality and faith. Other partisans of this theory, according to Kephart, were Paley, Doddridge, Van Oosterzee, Baxter, Erasmus, LeClerc, Farrar, Dorner, Alford, Calvin, and Lange. Kephart tries to make his view congenial to conservatives in the church, but his liberalism is obvious in his admission of affinity with Farrar and Dorner and his willingness to quote Goethe and Rousseau.[3]

Looking back on theological developments of the nineteenth century, students of historical theology have asked why the Wesleyan tradition so completely ignored Schleiermacher. His stress on Christian experience should have been attractive to those denominations influenced both by

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[1] W. C. Rebok, "Fundamental Faith," RT, July 13, 1887, p. 433. Joseph Cook expressed this idea in a lecture the following year (RT, April 11, 1888, p. 234).

[2] Editorial Note, RT, July 30, 1890, p. 481.

[3] E. B. Kephart, "Authenticity and Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures," Christian Doctrine, ed. Bishop Jonathan Weaver, pp. 390-97.

Continental and Wesleyan pietism. However, Wesleyans and others nurtured on Watson's Institutes believed in natural man's inability to apprehend divine things and in the need for an objective revelation in the Bible. Although they, like Schleiermacher, put experience at the center, they also were committed to biblicism and to the natural theology of Paley and his school of evidences.[1] This orientation, together with Schleiermacher's doctrinal deviations, served to alienate Methodists from him.

The Evangelical and United Brethren movements were only beginning when Schleiermacher was doing his work, but when they did become aware of him, their Common-Sense philosophy, their Watsonian-Methodist biblicism, and the advice of such trusted guides as Joseph Cook led them to reject him. In the early years, of course, Evangelicals and United Brethren had regarded rationalism and the Scriptures as sworn enemies.[2] They sharply modified this attitude in the middle years when they domesticated and embraced reason in order to combat the infidel who ignored the Bible.[3] So complete was this rapprochement with reason that they generally agreed that even the Bible should be understood in the light of reason.[4] Therefore, in the seventies and eighties when Joseph Cook attempted to "prove" religion scientifically, Evangelicals and United Brethren were predisposed by their Biblical rationalism to listen to him and to move steadily down a road toward theological rationalism that took them even further away from Schleiermacher.

Leland Scott has suggested that one reason Methodists rejected

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[1]Leland Scott, pp. 159, 190, passim. [2]Supra, p. 57. [3]Supra, p. 122.

[4]Towards the end of the century Evangelicals and United Brethren became acquainted with Miner Raymond, who Leland Scott calls "American Methodism's representative theologian." Raymond stressed the reasonableness of Scriptural theology. His faculty colleagues said at his death that his favorite phrase was "rational thought" (Scott, pp. 284-90).

Schleiermacher was that they were gradually losing vital contact with their own heritage at the point of the authority of experience.[1] However, this was not nearly so true of Evangelicals and United Brethren. Ever since the founding of both denominations they had held the twin authorities of Scripture and experience as equally important. They rejected Schleiermacher's theology simply because it contradicted one of those authorities. They felt no compulsion to adopt it in order to show the importance of Christian experience. Schleiermacher had his own problems in trying to communicate to a culture that knew Kant, Schelling, and Hegel, but they were not the problems of nineteenth-century Evangelicals and United Brethren, most of whom were convinced that he represented a fundamental distortion of the Gospel and that his approach would help them neither to win souls nor enlighten believers.

Neither denomination was unacquainted with Schleiermacher. Joseph Cook generated some interest by his allusions to him in his lectures. Anton Huelster probably was aware of his views if we can judge from his statement that "religion grows out of the conscious feeling of absolute dependence on a higher power."[2] However, in general both churches rejected him because of Cook's guidance and the fact that they were not yet prepared to give up their biblicism. Although Cook had a few kind words for Schleiermacher,[3] he clearly and definitely set himself against making the "Christian consciousness" the supreme authority in matters of religion. Indicating Schleiermacher's influence on Dorner, Cook makes his point very clearly:

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[1] Ibid, p. 159.

[2] Anton Huelster, "The Relation of Science to Religion," EM, October 25, 1881, p. 1.

[3] RT, March 4, 1885, p. 155.

> The obvious peril of this principle is that its tendency is to make the ultimate test of dogmatic certainty not what the Scriptures declare to be worthy of God, but what the Christian consciousness thinks to be worthy of God. We are not to follow scripture, even when its preponderating testimony is clear to us, provided our Christian consciousness is opposed to scripture. We are not to believe what we are taught by revelation as to God, but what we think we ought to be taught. We are not to hold facts of history and texts of scripture subject to that interpretation which a scientific treatment of the records of revelation requires; we are to put upon them an interpretation which we deem Christlike and most worthy of God. . . .
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> My central objection to Dorner's general system of thought is that his ultimate test of certainty, in many cases of the highest importance, is nothing more than individualistic whim. It may be regenerate individualism to which he appeals; it may be the Christian consciousness of the best portion of the church, age after age; it may be what he calls faith, regarded as, equally with the scripture, a work of the Holy Spirit; but in a close examination it will be found that it is on what man thinks God ought to teach, and not on what revelation shows that God does teach, that Dorner founds his theology.[1]

Most Evangelicals and United Brethren agreed with Cook's views on revelation. The Bible must be primary, but Christian experience would always be valuable corroborative evidence of the truth of the Scripture. Professor J. P. Landis of Union Biblical Seminary expounded this point of view with great firmness:

> I. The chief and primary source of materials for systematic theology is the Bible. If the Bible is what Christians claim--a positive revelation from God--then it is for us the only positive and authoritative source of doctrine. Christian theology is essentially Christological.
>
> II. We are now prepared to consider what are called secondary or subsidiary sources of dogmatics. These may be given as, first, Christian experience or Christian consciousness; second, confessions and systems; third, nature; fourth, philosophy.
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> 1. Christian experience gives us no new truth, no facts or principles not found in the Bible; but it illuminates and prepares the mind for the apprehension of the truth contained in the Word of God. (See Hodge, Systematic Theology, Volume I, page 15.)[2]

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[1]Joseph Cook, "Dorner's Eschatology," RT, May 9, 1883, pp. 522-23. Also see RT, April 9, 1884, p. 459.

[2]J. P. Landis, "Theology," Christian Doctrine, ed. Bishop Jonathan Weaver, pp. 33-34. Cf. RT, February 2, 1881, p. 298, for a similar statement by George Crooks of Drew Theological Seminary. Cf. also Bishop Nicholas Castle's statement in "May We Be Certain?" RT, September 19, 1883, p. 17.

Christian experience merely provided supporting evidence; this was as far as they would go with Schleiermacher.

Christian Faith and Science

Joseph Cook's views on science and religion were also influential, their chief effect being the reinforcement of the prevailing pattern of defensiveness. The church periodicals had long been attentive to science and its dangerous implications for Christian faith.[1] The resistance of Evangelicals and United Brethren to science often led them to rejoice in science's failures, to reject it outright, or to ignore it.

Conservative churchmen regarded the views of Darwin, Huxley, John Tyndall and other promulgators of new scientific views as especially menacing because of their wide popular appeal. After Tyndall's Belfast Address in 1874 "Cardinal Cullen appointed a three days' fast, in order to keep infidelity out of Ireland."[2] American Christians manifested similar anxiety. When Huxley appeared in New York to lecture on evolution, the Telescope editor wrote a defense against his introductory lecture.[3] Editor I. L. Kephart expressed joy and considerable relief at what seemed to him to be "the decline of Darwinism."[4]

Strengthened by the example of Joseph Cook, Evangelicals and United Brethren often were over-eager for a quick victory, which led to hasty announcements of the harmony of science and religion. Their efforts

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[1] EM, January 9, 1856, pp. 4-5; EM, April 30, 1856, pp. 71-72; EM, August 4, 1859, pp. 124-25; EM, February 15, 1865, pp. 49-50; EM, March 1, 1865, p. 66; EM, July 3, 1873, p. 212; EM, December 25, 1873, p. 412; EM, September 10, 1874, p. 292; RT, August 17, 1859, p. 197; RT, June 10, 1868, p. 314; RT, August 21, 1872, p. 401; RT, December 3, 1873, p. 73; RT, January 7, 1874, p. 116.

[2] John Fiske, Essays Historical and Literary (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1907), II, 247.

[3] Editorial, RT, September 6, 1876, p. 396. [4] RT, August 27, 1890, p. 545.

sometimes took the form of praising bad science or of seeking alliance with anyone who could find the desired harmony regardless of his prestige among scientists. Refusing to let science operate independently, they anxiously looked over the scientists's shoulder in order to insure that the results would not endanger religion. In this spirit Huelster reviewed Joseph Cook's Biology. He displayed a kind of nervous relief that the fangs of the deadly foe had been removed and that Cook had again shown science and religion to be in perfect harmony.[1]

S. P. Spreng objected to the slavish following of science, making the Bible follow science "in all the winding, tortuous paths through which she has to thread her way to find the heights of clearness and assurance." Spreng argued that many theologians conceded too much, became too easily alarmed, yielded to every "fresh demand of popular science." He saw such men making "quite an exhibition of logical suppleness, by the somersaults they turn to accommodate the godless scientist who pulls the wires."[2] Although he has just criticized those who were too eager to reshape religion to fit science Spreng now takes the opposite approach and tries to force science into a shape which will be congenial to religion, invoking Joseph Cook for support. Both approaches display an anxiety which is not in the best interests of a wholesome relation between science and religion. Much too quickly Spreng became convinced that "scientific conclusions that conflict with the Bible are found to conflict with nature itself; and will be abandoned sooner or later," and that science is "destined to furnish the strongest evidence that can be had for the supernatural authorship of the

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[1] EM, December 6, 1877, p. 389.

[2] S. P. Spreng, "Science and the Bible," EM, June 8, 1880, p. 1.

Bible."[1]

Although this defensiveness continued to prevail, a few voices advocated a genuine openness to the scientific world with which they had recently become acquainted. There is a hint of this in Spreng's qualified recommendation of Drummond's book, although the defensive mood is dominant.[2] Anton Huelster is more interested in a harmonization of the theory of evolution with religion; nevertheless, he demonstrates a degree of openness to science in his declaration that he would not want to be so foolish as to disagree with the results of reliable science, as Leibniz attacked the law of the attraction of gravity.[3] H. A. Thompson, corresponding secretary of the United Brethren Board of Education, declared in 1881 before the General Conference that "if the truths of science when really established as truth

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[1] Ibid., June 15, 1880, p. 1. A spate of editorials in both church papers echoed this sentiment; see Editorial, EM, January 12, 1886, p. 24; Editorial, EM, July 6, 1886, p. 424; D. B. Byers' comments on Cook's scientific supernaturalism, EM, June 12, 1883, p. 185. Also see Editorial, RT, June 11, 1890, p. 376; "Skeptical Quibbles," RT, December 11, 1889, p. 785; "The True vs. the Materialistic Scientist," RT, February 5, 1890, p. 81. In a brief editorial note in RT, December 31, 1890, p. 833, I. L. Kephart affirms that "science and Christianity, when calmly and seriously considered until understood, are always seen to be in perfect harmony with each other."

[2] Actually, Spreng's long review is a quite able piece of work. He thinks Drummond will supplant Paley and Butler, but challenges his view of sin because of its affinity with "Schleiermacher's view of sin as being merely an imperfection, arising from the limitations of human nature, and whence we shall consequently come by evolution" (EM, April 13, 1886, pp. 225-226). Cf. J. W. Etter's acceptance of Drummond in "The Existence of God," Christian Doctrine, ed. Bishop Jonathan Weaver, p. 53.

[3] EM, November 1, 1881, pp. 1-2. See Huelster's series of articles in EM (October 30, 1879, p. 1; November 6, 1879, p. 2; November 13, 1879, p. 1) on materialism, the philosophical position frequently associated with the new science. Although his purpose seems in large part to have been the demonstration of its errors, he was not hesitant to underline areas of agreement:

> "Now the truth of materialism we find in its high regard for the real, the visible. If an airy, idealistic philosophy declares that the material external world is only apparently real and may, for all we know,

are in opposition to the teachings of the Bible, we must accept them."[1] Just as clearly receptive to the findings of science was L. C. Shuey, son of the United Brethren publishing agent, who declared upon his graduation from Otterbein University: "As itself truth, Christianity must welcome all other truth, though it come through the channels of science. Christianity must patiently await the establishment of evolution as a fact, and accept it cordially, if eventually so established."[2] Older men, however, could not be quite so open. Science remained a potential enemy.

The Nature and Role of Theology

At three points Joseph Cook's influence upon the conception of the nature and role of theology becomes evident. One of these is the attitude towards natural theology. Since the origin of both denominations, natural theology, particularly the Paleyan type of Christian evidences, figured largely in their approach to theological problems. Professor Lewis Davis clearly stated this commitment in his address at the opening of the United Brethren theological school in Dayton, Ohio, in 1871: "Some theologians begin with God and thence descend to man; while others begin with man and thence ascend to God. We choose the latter."[3] Similar efforts to make

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be a delusion, and that the reality of the subjective ego alone is certain, materialism is emphatically correct in its asseveration that the testimony of our senses must be relied upon, that the world around us as well as our body is a solid fact. This fact is frequently repeated by the Bible, and the contrary conceited philosophy condemned (e.g., in Col. 2.8, 18, 23)" (Anton Huelster, "History and Principles of Materialism," EM, October 30, 1879, p. 1).

[1] GCJUB, 1881, p. 114.

[2] RT, June 25, 1884, p. 626. Shuey was planning to work in the YMCA in Xenia, Ohio.

[3] RT, October 18, 1871, p. 49.

theology a science appear throughout this period.[1] Cook helped to accentuate the reliance on natural theology and so to strengthen it as to transform its evidence from presumptive to demonstrative. But Cook also led them in new directions. We see one direction in Spreng's opinion that Drummond's book would supplant Paley and Butler in natural theology.[2] Cook was quite sure that Christians could naturalize evolution and make it fit into the church's natural theology. Another new direction was his tantalizing suggestion of "christocentric" natural theology, a possibility which he saw developing out of Lotze's personalistic philosophy.[3]

New understandings began to emerge at a second point--in the discussion which surged around the matter of creeds. This was short-lived among the Evangelicals because of the difficulty encountered by Editor Clewell when he attacked the Articles of Faith for their lack of originality and their confining character as "iron jackets."[4] Clewell lost his job over this matter and because of his deviation from the Wesleyan doctrine of Christian perfection; hence, succeeding editors took pains to defend the usefulness of creeds.[5] A glimmer of liberalism appears in S. P. Spreng's admission that creeds could be fallible. He goes on to assert, however, that the Apostles' Creed in fact is not. His conservative attitude towards

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[1]See J. B. Slight, "Theology," RT, August 25, 1880, p. 2; J. W. Fulkerson, "Christianity," RT, December 5, 1883, p. 169. Also see J. Haywood's series of articles on Butler's Analogy in RT, December 24, 1851, pp. 65, 69, 73, 77, and the three succeeding issues. C. B. Whitaker gave an address on "Theology a Science" when he was graduated from Union Biblical Seminary ("Seminary Commencement Exercises," RT, May 11, 1881, p. 520).

[2]EM, April 13, 1886, p. 225. [3]RT, April 9, 1884, p. 458.

[4]Supra, p. 103.

[5]See EM, February 16, 1871, p. 52; EM, March 9, 1871, p. 76. Also see Jacob Hartzler's editorial which was occasioned by the appearance of Schaff's Creeds of Christendom (EM, September 6, 1877, p. 284).

theology is evident in his opinion that "to say that theology must advance in the cardinal doctrines, and must change her opinion on these time-honored tenets, is to say that theology was in the wrong, that the Bible is behind the times, and that science and philosophy must show us the more excellent way."[1]

Editor H. B. Hartzler ventured a different opinion. He wanted to allow more freedom of opinion than he found in Romanism and affirmed his conviction that "the just shall live by faith," by "Christ and him crucified," not by a creed.[2] Apparently subsequent pressure caused him to counteract his editorial with another one two weeks later on the "Utility of Creeds," in which he declared that creeds should not be denounced as useless.[3]

In the United Brethren Church, however, the discussion surrounding creeds was not thus short-circuited. Two definite shifts in sentiment are clear. Early in the period the tendency was to look upon creeds as relatively useless; they got in the way of the Bible and turned attention away from the need for Christian experience.[4]

Infidel threats in the sixties and seventies helped to shift sentiment back to favor creeds. They were seen as important tools to guard the church against straying into error.[5] The Rev. B. F. Booth's blast at

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[1]S. P. Spreng, "Liberal Tendencies," EM, November 13, 1879, pp. 1-2.

[2]H. B. Hartzler, "Creed or Christ--Which?" EM, September 7, 1880, p. 4.

[3]H. B. Hartzler, "Utility of Creeds," EM, September 21, 1880, p. 4.

[4]See Spayth, I, 15. Cf. this squib in RT, September 13, 1854, p. 1: "A church may have all good in its creed, but if it sits on its eggless nest, and never incubates, it is just as dead as its opposite neighbor, who believes in all manner of error."

[5]See "The Unitarian Decline," RT, November 11, 1868, p. 73. Also see John Vinton Potts, Christian Co-operation (Dayton, Ohio: United Brethren Publishing House, 1874), especially Argument II, pp. 149-156.

"liberals" in 1873 was back-handed support for creeds:

> There is vast concern manifested at the present time, by man, in behalf of liberal principles and measures, and a long, loud wail is being lifted against the oppression of creeds and the so-called tyranny of pure religious views and Bible doctrines. Men are traversing the country, lecturing to the people, deifying Tom Paine and others of like views, and at the same time they are defaming the name of Christ our Savior, and the Bible, God's holy word. . . . How much at variance with common sense is it for a man to get up and belch forth the foul odor of his own diseased brain against creeds, when at the same time he seeks to rivet upon his hearers liberal principles which are simply his creed and confession?[1]

The Telescope editors agreed with Booth: "A creedless church may be sentimental and pleasantly sympathetic, but it will add very little to the abiding might of that army of the Lord that is set to wrestle down principalities and powers, and Christ's standard where Satan's seat is."[2] But sentiment had begun to change. As early as 1874 a Telescope editorial which defended creeds also admitted that they do not "formulate absolute truth."[3]

The change was rapid after the 1885 General Conference which appointed a commission to revise the Constitution and the Confession of Faith. J. W. Hott, the editor of the Telescope, initiated a campaign to show his readers that although creeds were important, they could and should change.[4] In keeping with the stance of defense against error, the editor asserted that United Brethren should revise their creed in order to defend more properly against new errors. The declaration of A. A. Hodge, the stalwart Princeton

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[1] B. F. Booth, "Liberals," RT, April 23, 1873, p. 265.

[2] RT, July 2, 1873, p. 345. See "Anti-creed Demagogism," RT, October 27, 1875, p. 36. Also see Assistant Editor Tobey's favorable report on a sermon by the Rev. Dr. Morris of Lane Theological Seminary, Cincinnati (RT, September 4, 1878, p. 396).

[3] "Formulated Creeds," RT, June 17, 1874, p. 300.

[4] J. W. Hott, "Creeds and Confessions of Faith," RT, July 29, 1885, p. 488.

Presbyterian and Calvinist, that he could subscribe to the United Brethren Confession of Faith came as a shock to these Arminians.[1] However, the urge to revise the Confession developed a new justification beyond the need to defend against new heresies and beyond their involvement in the revision of their constitution. Because of their new contacts with the outside theological world which were stimulated by Joseph Cook, United Brethren moved towards a more dynamic concept of religious language. The Rev. Daniel Berger found Franz Delitzsch's words appropriate: "The church's credo is changeable, for the knowledge which is therein expressed has, from time to time, a smelting to undergo."[2] Bishop Weaver had learned from Philip Schaff that "all creeds are human, fallible, and imperfect, and admit of improvement."[3] Editor Kephart was admitting that "creeds being but human forms of the expression of human beliefs, they are necessarily imperfect" and need to be improved.[4] "Creeds are like men--they are born to die." Although the doctrines of the Christian faith "as taught by Christ are unchangeable," they are entirely "of human construction,"[5] since Christ gave no formula for creeds. At least some United Brethren were recognizing the relativity and brokenness of human thought forms about the divine.

The third area where attitudes toward theology reveal change is in the discussion surrounding the need for a theological textbook which occurred in both denominations. Although the Evangelicals did not state explicitly the reasons for encouraging the publication of a theological textbook, one important reason no doubt was the rash of doctrinal disagreements which had arisen over the previous few years, the result of one being

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[1] RT, August 19, 1885, p. 536. [2] RT, March 13, 1889, p. 169.
[3] RT, April 16, 1890, p. 244. [4] RT, January 22, 1890, p. 50.
[5] RT, September 3, 1890, p. 564.

the removal of T. G. Clewell from his editorial post with the Evangelical Messenger in 1870.[1]

The discussion among the United Brethren had a much longer history. The first plea for a standard theology came in the course of the agitation of the depravity question which threatened to split the church in the forties and fifties, but which was settled in 1857. Churchmen complained that "our preachers often study different systems of theology, and consequently embrace different doctrines &c., and become as a house divided against itself," this evil manifesting itself "in the late discussion on the doctrine of depravity."[2] Editor Lawrence was not very sympathetic with those who wanted such a book, for he thought the Bible was far more reliable.[3] Although some men declared that other good and proper reasons for a theological textbook would be that it would add to the influence and unity of the denomination, and that the dignity and honor of United Brethren demanded it,[4] the discussion continued to revolve around whether it was needed to combat heresy within the church.[5]

After the advent of Joseph Cook the discussion took a new turn. Interest in a systematic theology grew simply because of the developing conviction that theology ought to be systematic. J. P. Landis of Union Biblical Seminary and M. R. Drury, assistant editor of the Telescope, proclaimed

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[1]The General Conference of 1871 authorized a theological textbook (Albright, p. 279). See the Episcopal Address to General Conference in 1875 (EM, October 21, 1875, pp. 332-33). Cf. EM, July 16, 1889, p. 457.

[2]RT, March 26, 1845, p. 140.

[3]RT, April 28, 1852, p. 138. Cf. RT, March 3, 1852, p. 106.

[4]RT, May 3, 1876, p. 250.

[5]RT, June 7, 1865, p. 162; RT, May 11, 1881, p. 514; RT, April 15, 1885, pp. 242-43.

that the doctrines of the Bible ought to be systematically arranged, and that Christianity was a complete "religious system" and should be so studied.[1] In fact, a man who has not "studied theology as a system . . . is not a safe pulpit-teacher."[2]

Some voices opposed the proposed textbook, also. J. P. Landis himself rejoiced in 1888 that such a book had not been written, for no one yet possessed the competence to do it.[3] But there were other reasons for opposing a standard theology. The influence of Cook, the upsurge of theological interest and study, and the openness to new ideas had led a few to new convictions about the changing nature of human language--even about God--and of the need to be open to ever new theological modes of expression in order to speak meaningfully to their contemporaries. These insights, employed by Weaver and I. L. Kephart in justifying the new Confession of Faith formulated in 1889,[4] were expressed ably by the Rev. H. D. Herr in his argument against the adoption of an official theology. Herr directed his fire against an over-confidence in logic:

> But what has contributed perhaps as much as anything to the formation of an artificial method of scripture exposition is the attempt to measure everything by the forms of logic. Starting with some great truth we endeavor to bring everything into formal, logical consistency with it, and so fall into a false and torturous manner. . . .

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[1] RT, September 15, 1880, p. 2; RT, September 20, 1882, pp. 818-19.

[2] "Doctrinal Soundness and Loyalty," RT, September 3, 1884, p. 792. Bishop Weaver prefaced his book on Christian Doctrine with the statement that "Christianity is a complete system" (p. ix). In the opening chapter of the book Professor J. P. Landis defines Christian theology as "the systematic exhibition of the truths of revelation made in Jesus Christ, together with the principles involved in those truths" (Ibid., p. 18). He is careful to refute Drummond's contention that "there is no worse enemy to a living church than a propositional theology, with the latter controlling the former by traditional authority" (Ibid., p. 22).

[3] J. P. Landis, "That Theology," RT, February 22, 1888, p. 113.

[4] Supra, pp. 190-191.

> The fact is, the nature of God is so manifold that paradoxical representation and contradictory figures are necessary to a verbal revelation setting him forth; and so it comes that the Bible, as one has said, is at once the most contradictory and at the same time the truest book in the world. And the wisdom which interprets it aright is not a constructive wisdom drawn out in the form of logical propositions and deductions, but is, as the same author states it, a wisdom of "insight." Luther describes reason as absolutely blind in divine things, and if the saying is applied to a formal logic he was not far wrong. It is to be hoped that theologians will soon see the truth of Dorner's saying, that "it is a contradiction in one breath to speak of reason as at once the pupil and the judge of revelation; for the natural reason is supposed to be able to lay down criteria--not merely negative, which revelation may not contradict, but also positive, to which it must conform. But if the empirical reason, as is simultaneously granted, is tinged with error, revelation may, indeed must, perfectly well contradict it." The declaration of Sir William Hamilton that "no difficulty emerges in theology which has not previously emerged in philosophy," is true just because, to adopt Bushnell's figure, we put our faith to school, to our logic, instead of putting our reason to school, to faith.[1]

Herr manifests his affinity with Dorner and much of liberal theology in his appeal for the "most careful regard" for the testimony of the "consciousness of regenerated humanity" and in this plea for a relaxation of dogmatism:

> If God is truth, and the universe but an inadequate expression of the contents of his nature, what should we expect but that old truths will be perpetually presenting themselves at new angles, and new and complemental truths successively opening to us, each of which will necessitate a shade of modification in those doctrines which before were stated in an exclusive and absolute form. Surely it were the part of a humble, and therefore more likely true, wisdom to admit that just as the scientists have often wrongly interpreted the book of nature, so we, in many instances, may have misinterpreted the word of God. The trouble is, we will have it that our dogmas are in all respects true interpretations, and if one cross our dogma we at once accuse him of contradicting the Scriptures. . . .
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> . . . Semler's great principle, according to which he assigned theology to the intellectual realm and religion to the heart, though in its application exaggerated by him,--a principle re-appearing under a somewhat different guise in Kant, and reaching a more consistent application by means of Schleiermacher,--has also significant truth for us.
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> . . . It is held, furthermore, that Hagenbach speaks truth when he says, "The very language of the Bible does not bring truth in the same

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[1]H. D. Herr, "Theological Interpretation of the Scriptures," RT, April 2, 1884, p. 434.

> guise to every one, and up to a certain point it may be said, that with a common groundwork of religious belief, yet every one has a special creed, a separate theology, a treasury of inner experiences, and views different from those of any one else. And this is in no wise to be regretted. A universal, objective religion, which has the same value for all, like the formulas of mathematics, has never been given us, and whenever there has been an attempt to fashion such a religion of men, there has been a skeleton of a dead conformity, rather than the living soul of an active and growing faith."[1]

Although Herr asserted that it is "the mission of theology to make clear and intelligible the processes of the religious life and the ground of salvation," he still wanted to retain the "Bible as the standard of ultimate appeal in matters of faith." His indecisiveness is illustrative of the shifting, unfinished, and inchoate opinions of United Brethren regarding the nature of theology. They had a tradition which stressed the propositional and static nature of theology, a tradition which in some respects Joseph Cook strengthened. On the other hand, Cook's influence, together with other stimuli, brought them into contact with Schleiermacher's successors and their more dynamic understanding of religious language. In 1890 the attraction of a rationalistic biblicism appeared stronger than an understanding of theology influenced by Schleiermacher, Bushnell and Dorner; this was even more true of Evangelicals than of United Brethren. However, which way the tide would move was not at all certain.

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[1] Ibid.

PART III

1890 TO 1930

X. THE LURE OF LIBERALISM

Historical Introduction

The Evangelical Association and the Church of the United Brethren in Christ entered the final decade of the nineteenth century in quite different conditions. Although both were suffering from schisms, these rifts affected them differently. The issue over which United Brethren divided in 1889 was a revision of the Constitution which provided for pro rata and lay representation in General Conference and omitted the restrictive rule about membership in secret societies. The group that withdrew was small--about 15,000--and left United Brethren with almost 200,000 members in 1890. The new Constitution and Confession of Faith adopted in 1889 were the products of the more progressive and forward-looking leaders of the church, thus arming United Brethren with self-confidence and optimism as they faced the future. In the next forty years they doubled their membership.

On the other hand, Evangelicals became involved in an intra-mural quarrel over the degree and character of episcopal power that was far more destructive to denominational strength and morale.[1] Intensified by misunderstanding and the incompatibility of a few leaders, it resulted in a three to two division in the membership. The smaller group, which lost most of the church property and all but one of the educational institutions, organized themselves as the United Evangelical Church in 1894.[2] Before

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[1]Eller, These Evangelical United Brethren, pp. 75-77.

[2]They had begun a journal, The Evangelical, as early as 1888.

long the two groups began to draw closer together, however, and in 1922 they were reunited,[1] but the nature and depth of the quarrel had left a scar. Denominational growth was considerably slowed, and for a decade the attention of both groups was diverted from larger issues to their own internal strife. Furthermore, German immigration was declining markedly, falling off from a peak of 1,452,970 in the decade 1881-90 to only half a million in the next ten years.[2] Evangelicals, who had not shed their image as a German church, felt the effect of this continuing decline in the twentieth century.

As in earlier years, the denominational journals performed important roles as the theological forums of the church. I. L. Kephart and J. M. Phillippi of the Religious Telescope, S. P. Spreng of the Evangelical Messenger and H. B. Hartzler of The Evangelical all exerted powerful influence upon the thought of their respective denominations. Other opportunities for theological expression were becoming available, however. Denominational writers were producing more books, and in 1890 United Brethren inaugurated the Quarterly Review, a scholarly theological journal which lasted nineteen years.

As the end of the century approached, the theological stance of Evangelicals and United Brethren was far from clear. One reason for this was the fact that the bishops provided little measurable leadership in theology. Their primary tasks were stimulating denominational growth, providing leadership for the organizational structure, and encouraging revivalistic activity. There were exceptions, of course. Bishop Rudolph Dubs probably

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[1]The portion of the United Evangelical Church which did not enter the union became known as the Evangelical Congregational Church.

[2]Faust, I, 582.

I. L. KEPHART and J. M. PHILLIPPI
(A.W. Drury, HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF THE UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST – Courtesy of The Otterbein Press)

UNITED BRETHREN BISHOPS IN 1923

WILLIAM M. BELL	A. R. CLIPPINGER	W. M. WEEKLEY
W. H. WASHINGER	H. H. FOUT	C. J. KEPHART

(A. W. Drury, HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF THE UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST – Courtesy of The Otterbein Press)

was as well informed theologically as any other Evangelical leader, and he often spoke on theological topics at conferences and ministerial meetings. Bishop Esher wrote a textbook in systematic theology (1899-1901) for Evangelicals; yet it was hardly his most significant contribution to the life of his denomination.[1] Bishop Weekley became a self-appointed leader of the fundamentalist element among United Brethren, as Bishop Mills had been of liberal minds for a decade and a half before his death in 1909. Each of these men had an influence, but their opinions were not necessarily normative. All United Brethren knew that each man was free to make his own theological decisions. The greatest influence was wielded by the editors of the denominational periodicals simply by virtue of the size of their audience and the opportunity for repetition afforded by the weekly publication of their journals.

A second factor contributing to the theological uncertainty of the period is the ambiguity which characterized the efforts of those who did seek to mold the theological mind of the churches. Unaware of the far-reaching implications of the new liberalism, some men could embrace notions which ultimately were mutually irreconcilable. Sometimes they seemed to be caught between a tradition of opposing anything new--the familiar pattern of engaging in theological endeavor to defend the faith--and, on the other hand, a fascination with new currents of thought which they found surprisingly relevant to the long-standing commitment to the centrality of Christian experience.

A third factor was the denominational self-consciousness. Earlier in the nineteenth century their denominational roles were clear. Both churches

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[1]Raymond Albright says that Esher had difficulty getting his Christliche Theologie published because of lack of interest (Interview, June, 1960).

had begun as outgrowths of the Second Great Awakening in America, and they felt the challenge to evangelize the great group of Americans outside the church. It was a mission to warm the heart and stir the conscience, with Evangelicals giving special attention to the growing group of German immigrants. But now with the widespread acceptance of the pattern of large-scale interdenominational revivalism and its accompaniments of emotionalism and moral renovation, what was left for Evangelicals and United Brethren to do? With the onset of theological liberalism, the rise of the ecumenical movement, and the fact of their upward social mobility, the question of raison d'etre became even more acute. Some saw the mission of their denomination as that of defending pure doctrine against the innovators, whereas others envisioned the possibility of enriching the ecumenical movement by contributing the spirit and life of young, virile, and enthusiastic denominations. Yet even the most ardent supporters of the ecumenical movement were not eager to lose their denominational identity. United Brethren talked seriously about union with Methodist Protestants, Congregationalists, and Evangelical and Reformed, but were far too obviously a success story to sacrifice United Brethrenism easily.[1] They and Evangelicals did come to accept other evangelical denominations as almost equal members of a larger Christian church. Earlier in the nineteenth century both groups, particularly the Evangelicals, had behaved and sounded as though they thought they were the repristinated and restored New Testament church. The passing decades, "modern" revivalism, and the ecumenical movement had changed that.

This development into mature denominations--the coming out into the larger life of American Protestantism--suggests a natural organization for

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[1] Supra, p. 197.

the third part of this study. The primary concern, of course, is still the attempt to understand how Evangelicals and United Brethren approached and understood the theological task of the church, and this requires a look at their internal life. But now it becomes far more relevant to study their confrontations with the larger theological developments which dominated the American scene. As they entered the twentieth century, both churches became far more a part of these trans-denominational theological currents than they had been before. Both denominations adopted the uniform Sunday School lesson program in 1872, joined the Foreign Missions Conference of North America in 1893 and the Home Missions Council in 1908, were charter members of the Federal Council of Churches formed in 1908, and affiliated with the International Council of Religious Education upon its organization in 1922.[1] Therefore, this part is organized around four trans-denominational movements and the reactions of Evangelicals and United Brethren to them: theological liberalism, higher criticism, the fundamentalist movement, and the ecumenical movement. These are far more important factors than they might seem, since no first-rate creative theologian emerged in either church (with the possible exception of S. J. Gamertsfelder of the Evangelical Association). Evangelical and United Brethren theological leaders were usually occupied with mediating the ideas of others in terms acceptable to their brethren. This makes it doubly important to trace their contact with and reaction to the larger theological movements of their time.

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[1]Eller, These Evangelical United Brethren, p. 117.

Acquaintance with Liberal Leaders

During the 1890's the number of young liberals who came to influential positions in American theological education is impressive.[1] Many of these men had studied in Germany, where they had confronted the liberal reaction to the Protestant scholasticism and rationalism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Within a decade the change in the seminaries was immense. Unavoidably, Evangelicals and United Brethren began to feel the influence of this new theological development.[2]

Attendance at other seminaries.--As Evangelical and United Brethren ministerial students began to attend such schools as Garrett, Drew, and Chicago, they came in contact with representatives of the new evangelical liberalism. The Rev. D. E. Thomas, who was acting president of Western Union College in 1908-1909, was a graduate of the Divinity School of the University of Chicago and had spent one year at Yale.[3] To the University of Chicago summer session in 1911 came five United Brethren graduates of Otterbein University alone, together with President Walter G. Clippinger.[4]

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[1]Some of these were H. C. Sheldon at Boston, Milton Terry at Garrett, Olin Curtis at Drew, Charles Briggs, William Adams Brown and A. C. McGiffert at Union Theological Seminary, Henry Churchill King and Frank Hugh Foster at Oberlin, William Newton Clarke at Colgate, Levi Payne at Bangor, George B. Foster at Chicago, and Preserved Smith at Lane Seminary.

[2]See Kenneth Cauthen, The Impact of American Religious Liberalism (New York: Harper and Row, 1962). For a concise treatment of the formative principles of liberalism see John Dillenberger and Claude Welch, Protestant Christianity (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954), pp. 211-217.

[3]The Evangelical, September 2, 1908, p. 569; cited hereafter as TE. In one of its more liberal moments The Evangelical advertised the summer session of the University of Chicago, at which were scheduled to teach such men as Marcus Dods of the Free Church College in Edinburgh, Shailer Mathews, Herbert Willett, and President William Rainey Harper (TE, June 24, 1901, pp. 196-97).

[4]RT, July 26, 1911, p. 7.

The following June Professor Herbert L. Willett went to Otterbein to give the commencement address.[1] Three professors at Bonebrake Theological Seminary during this period received at least part of their graduate training at the University of Chicago: J. B. Showers, C. E. Ashcraft, and Merl Harner.[2]

Another school which exercised a liberalizing influence was Drew, particularly upon United Evangelical students, who had no theological school of their own to attend.[3] L. C. Hunt, who was elected to the presidency of Albright College in 1915, took his undergraduate work and an M. A. at Dickinson, received a B. D. from Drew, and did graduate work both at Drew and at Columbia University.[4] Another Drew man who became prominent in theological education in the Evangelical Church and subsequently in the larger denomination after 1946 was J. Arthur Heck, who received B.D., S.T.M., and Th.D. degrees from Drew.[5]

Theological students also continued to make their way to Yale. Two United Brethren students, Philo W. Drury and John E. Foster, went from Western College, Toledo, Iowa, to study at Yale in 1897.[6] L. F. John joined the faculty at Lebanon Valley in 1901 after a B.D. and two years of

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[1] RT, June 19, 1912, p. 18.

[2] RT, June 19, 1926, p. 15; RT, November 27, 1926, p. 2; RT, June 18, 1927, p. 9. The name of Union Biblical Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, was changed in 1909 to Bonebrake Theological Seminary as a result of a $50,000 donation (Drury, History, p. 646).

[3] See editorial note in TE, April 24, 1912, p. 264. One of these students was S. B. Vandersall of the Ohio Conference (TE, October 6, 1909, p. 625; TE, April 17, 1912, p. 249).

[4] TE, June 23, 1915, p. 2.

[5] EM, June 5, 1926, p. 16; EM, May 21, 1927, p. 16.

[6] RT, June 23, 1897, p. 781.

graduate work in philosophy at Yale.[1] The same year Dr. George Scott acceded to the presidency of Otterbein after earning a Ph.D. at Yale.[2] The influential president of North Central College for thirty years, E. E. Rall, earned a Ph.D. at Yale in 1903.[3] Although he did not do his work in theology, he seems not to have escaped the influence of liberal theological ideas. The Rev. Charles A. Mock did two years of graduate work at Yale before becoming president of Western Union College in 1911.[4]

The growing tie between Lebanon Valley College and Yale further strengthened the old link between United Brethren and Yale Divinity School. Elias Hershey Sneath, a graduate of the 1881 class at Lebanon Valley who became a professor at Yale, at least twice participated in the commencement activities of his alma mater as guest speaker.[5] On another occasion Sneath's brother Isaiah, together with Henry Hallam Tweedy, Yale homiletics professor, were the speakers at a Lebanon Valley commencement.[6] Another alumnus, Raymond P. Dougherty of the class of 1897, earned his Ph.D. from Yale and eventually held the chair of Assyriology and Babylonian Literature at Yale. He, too, returned to deliver a baccalaureate sermon at his alma mater.[7]

During the twenties other United Brethren made their way to Yale. J. R. Howe from Otterbein took his place on the faculty of Bonebrake Theological Seminary in 1927 after a Ph.D. under D. C. Macintosh.[8] Bonebrake's professor of Religious Education, W. A. Weber, spent the 1923-1924 school

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[1] RT, July 10, 1901, p. 877. [2] RT, July 31, 1901, p. 964.
[3] EM, June 14, 1916, p. 2. [4] TE, April 26, 1911, p. 260.
[5] RT, June 20, 1900, p. 781; RT, July 2, 1921, p. 17.
[6] RT, July 1, 1922, p. 19. [7] RT, July 19, 1930, pp. 18-19.
[8] RT, June 19, 1926, p. 15; RT, September 3, 1927, p. 9.

year studying at Yale.[1] In 1930 Shenandoah College, the United Brethren school at Dayton, Virginia (moved in 1959 to Winchester, Virginia), chose the Rev. V. L. Phillips as their new president.[2] Phillips was working toward a Ph.D. at Yale, having earned a degree at Otterbein in 1917 and a B.D. at Yale in 1926.

Garrett Biblical Institute, where Milton Terry and H. F. Rall held forth, was another source of influence.[3] In 1925 Rall preached the baccalaureate sermon at North Central College (then North-Western College);[4] since his brother was president of the college, this probably was not his only appearance there. W. E. Roush, who went to Bonebrake in 1928 to teach, studied at Northwestern University (of which Garrett was a part),[5] and the Rev. Martin I. Webber, new United Brethren Director of Adult Work in 1929, took an M.A. in psychology at Northwestern and was working there toward a Ph.D. in Religious Education when he was chosen for his new job.[6]

Yet another source of liberal influence was Boston, from whence came the Rev. D. W. Staffeld with an M.R.E. in 1920 to teach Religious Education at Evangelical Theological Seminary.[7] The trustees reassured those who were dubious about his orthodoxy, but it was not long before he was saying such non-traditional things as this: "The only hope for a better world, then, lies in a trained teaching force."[8]

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[1] RT, October 11, 1924, p. 15. [2] RT, June 28, 1930, pp. 10-11.

[3] TE, November 26, 1913, p. 5; TE, August 27, 1919, p. 7.

[4] EM, August 1, 1925, p. 20. [5] RT, June 25, 1927, p. 15.

[6] RT, September 14, 1929, p. 10.

[7] EM, June 23, 1920, p. 2; EM, July 12, 1920, p. 5.

[8] D. W. Staffeld, "The Only Hope for a Better World," EM, January 24, 1921, pp. 6-7. See D. W. Staffeld, "Religious Education and Evangelism," EM, April 18, 1921, p. 6.

Courses of study.--Another indication of receptivity to liberal theological ideas was the changes made in the ministerial courses of study. In the early years of the twentieth century these titles appeared on the book lists:

United Brethren Church

1905 - Richard Ely, Social Aspects of Christianity[1]
1909 - Washington Gladden, The Christian Pastor[2]
A. C. Zenos, Elements of Higher Criticism
Walter Rauschenbusch, Christianity and the Social Crisis
1913 - Borden P. Bowne, Philosophy of Theism[3]
1917 - Walter Rauschenbusch, Christianizing the Social Order[4]

United Evangelical Church

1910 - H. C. Sheldon, System of Christian Doctrine[5]
Shailer Mathews, Social Studies[6]
George Stevens, The Theology of the New Testament[7]

Evangelical Association

1911 - George Stevens, The Theology of the New Testament[8]
Walter Rauschenbusch, Christianity and the Social Crisis
1919 - Horace Bushnell, Christian Nurture[9]

Other contacts with American liberals.--That Evangelicals and United

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[1] Discipline of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, 1905, p. 74. Ely was an aggressive advocate of the social gospel who earned a reputation as a brilliant young economist at John Hopkins University (Olmstead, pp. 490-491).

[2] Discipline of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, 1909, p. 79.

[3] Ibid., 1913, p. 81. [4] Ibid., 1917, p. 72. [5] Supra, p. 202.

[6] Mathews was a proponent of the social gospel as Dean of the Divinity School of the University of Chicago.

[7] TE, October 26, 1910, pp. 676-677. See Bainton's explanation of Stevens' theological viewpoint in Yale and the Ministry, pp. 179-180.

[8] Discipline of the Evangelical Association, 1913, pp. 247-248.

[9] Ibid., 1920, p. 248.

Brethren were becoming familiar with liberal theologians and were being influenced by them is clear from the friendly references they made to such men as William Rainey Harper and Harry Emerson Fosdick. The Evangelical, whose editorial policy generally was quite conservative, had good words to say for Harper when he appeared on the program of a Christian Endeavor Society meeting in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and again when he was about to undergo an operation for cancer in 1905.[1] Spreng of the Messenger also spoke appreciatively of Harper at his death the following year.[2]

A good deal of vituperation was directed at Harry Emerson Fosdick, but some Evangelicals and United Brethren were willing to listen to Fosdick and learn from him. In 1923 a missionary to Japan, Warren H. Hayes, wrote an article for the Religious Telescope in which he recommended books by Henry Churchill King of Oberlin, Rauschenbusch, and Fosdick.[3] The publication of this article may well have been the incident which spurred the United Brethren mission board later that year to pass a strongly-worded resolution asserting its unswerving orthodoxy.[4] But Hayes was not the only Fosdick admirer. In the early twenties United Evangelical students at Bible Teachers' Training School in New York City (later Biblical Theological Seminary) often attended First Presbyterian Church in order to hear the popular preacher.[5] J. Gordon Howard, later the president of Otterbein College and currently a bishop, contributed an article to the Telescope in

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[1] TE, November 6, 1889, p. 356; TE, February 22, 1905, p. 120.

[2] EM, January 17, 1906, p. 3.

[3] Warren H. Hayes, "Bible and Devotional Life," RT, April 21, 1923, pp. 6-7.

[4] Infra, p. 281.

[5] Interview with Vernon L. Farnham, September, 1963.

which he referred to Fosdick in these glowing terms: "To hear him is to understand why he is one of two or three who are doing more than any other to bring back to Christ the students of America."[1]

Other liberals at Union Theological Seminary also were being heard and appreciated. A reviewer in the Quarterly Review gave his approbation to William Adams Brown's The Essence of Christianity in these words: "It is an able book, and deserves a place in every minister's library."[2] During the summer of 1922 Professor G. B. Kimmel of Evangelical Theological Seminary and his pastor, R. W. Schloerb, attended the Mid-Summer Conference at Union.[3]

Oberlin was another source of liberal currents. In 1899 the Rev. John Barrows, president of Oberlin College, spoke at Otterbein University's commencement,[4] and ten years later Henry Churchill King, the epitome of liberal theology in Ohio, was the invited guest at another Otterbein commencement.[5] In 1924 Dean E. I. Bosworth of Oberlin's School of Theology delivered the commencement address at Evangelical Theological Seminary.[6] The ideas of American liberals were receiving a widespread hearing among Evangelicals and United Brethren.

Rapprochement with German theology.--Sydney Ahlstrom has pointed out

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[1]J. Gordon Howard, "Some New York Preachers," RT, December 17, 1927, pp. 6-7. A. E. Hangen, the editor of The Evangelical, was also appreciative of Fosdick; see his comments on Fosdick's beliefs about Christ and his use of a Fosdick exegesis of Ephesians 3:14, 19 (TE, December 19, 1922, p. 5; TE, August 1, 1922, p. 5). Editor Frye of the Messenger apparently thought it was safe by 1930 to use an excerpt from a Fosdick sermon in his "Jottings from Recent Sermons," EM, February 22, 1930, p. 5.

[2]Review of The Essence of Christianity, by William Adams Brown, Quarterly Review, XIV (May-June, 1903), 192. Cited hereafter as QR.

[3]EM, July 17, 1922, p. 12.

[4]RT, June 21, 1899, p. 781.

[5]RT, June 16, 1909, p. 16.

[6]EM, June 27, 1925, p. 10.

that the first quarter of the nineteenth century was a kind of watershed after which German thought exerted greater influence on American theology.[1] Evangelicals and United Brethren also manifest an increasing awareness of German theological developments, but until the seventies the contact with Germany led them to react strongly against what they were learning. The influence of Joseph Cook helped to modify this attitude, but there remained considerable reluctance to trust German theologians.[2] To the Rev. William H. Bucks, Spreng's editorial successor, it was unforgivable that German universities would permit theological professors to teach without a commitment to Christianity. His view of theological training demanded that a school be concerned about the "growth in grace of their students."[3] United Evangelicals shared this distrust of German theology; they were happy to report in 1901 that Adolf Harnack's Das Wesen des Christentums had received widespread clerical condemnation in Germany.[4]

Although some continued to act as though German theology existed only to be refuted, there were others who wanted to learn. Although Anton Huelster's German Ph.D. in theology frightened and offended some, it seems to have shown others that one could profit by acquaintance with German theological developments. In fact, his friend Bishop Rudolph Dubs sent his son to Germany for four years of theological study after his graduation

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[1] Ahlstrom, The Shaping of American Religion, p. 235.

[2] For instance, in 1890 a United Brethren reviewer complained that Current Discussions in Theology, seventh volume in an annual series done by professors of Chicago Theological Seminary, devoted "too much space . . . to German writers for American students," linking this critique to the comment that they accord "too much hospitality" to works which "minimize the supernatural element in the Bible" (QR, I [October, 1890], 387).

[3] W. H. Bucks, "Important Words," EM, December 5, 1893, p. 770.

[4] TE, July 15, 1901, p. 221.

from Oberlin College.[1] Apparently Germany did not corrupt C. Newton Dubs, for he forthwith dedicated himself to a lifetime of missionary service in China, serving for many years as the effective superintendent of the United Evangelical mission in China.

Either through his son or through his own independent study, Bishop Dubs maintained an interest in and a familiarity with German theology. He acquired a reputation for being "deeply versed in current German theology;"[2] he lectured to fellow ministers on the subject; and he often praised those of his colleagues who kept abreast of theological developments in Germany.[3] Dubs' example led other leaders to familiarize themselves with the writings of German theologians.[4]

In the Evangelical Association, too, there was a growing appreciation of German theology. The biographer of the Rev. C. F. Zimmermann says of this leader of the church from Wisconsin that he was a man "of great learning and really scholarly attainments in his chosen field," being especially "familiar with the works and views of German thinkers, philosophers and theologians;" he has "never met his equal in that."[5]

The most influential Evangelical to respond appreciatively to evangelical liberalism was Solomon J. Gamertsfelder. President of the seminary at Naperville from 1908 to 1919, Gamertsfelder was reared among Evangelicals in Coshocton County, Ohio, and entered the ministry after his graduation

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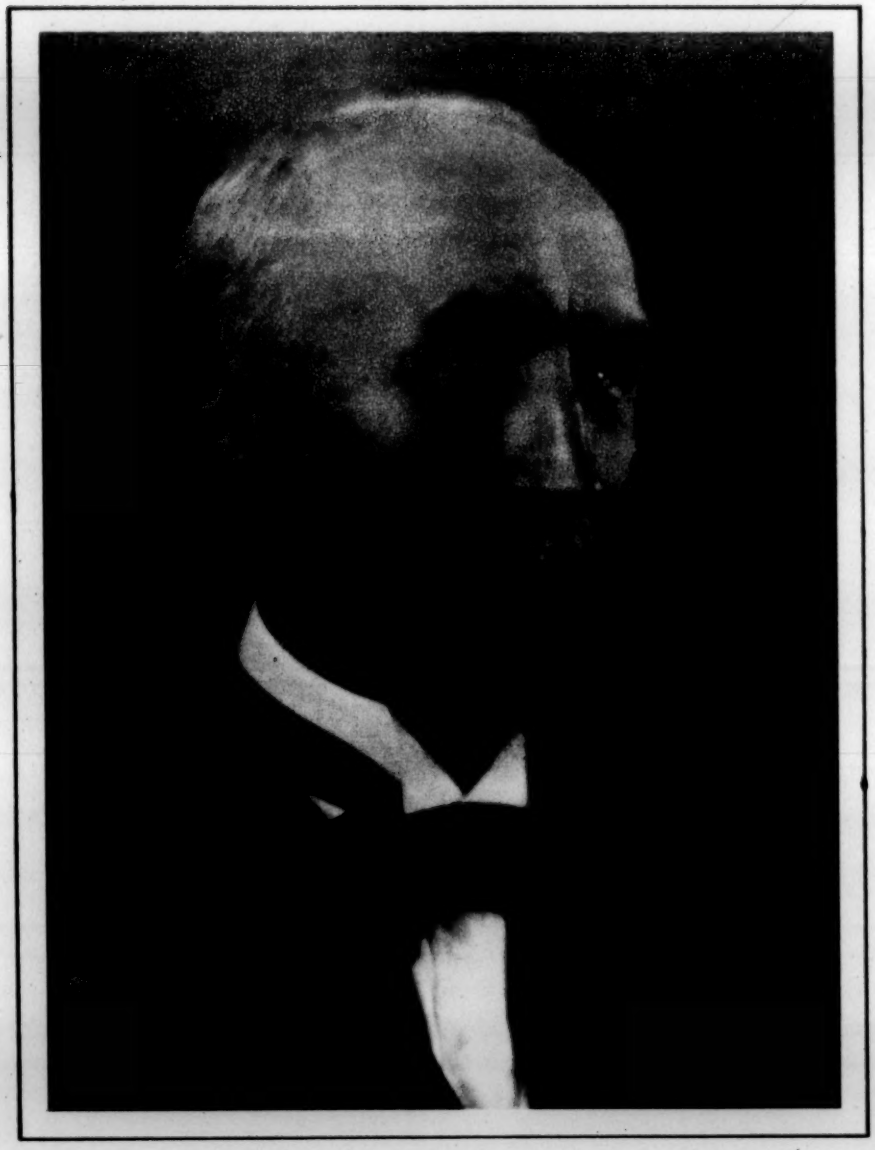
[1] TE, June 26, 1889, p. 205. [2] TE, August 12, 1891, p. 249.

[3] See, for example, TE, January 19, 1910, p. 44.

[4] See H. H. Thoren, "Heresy Agitations," TE, June 6, 1899, p. 178.

[5] EM, September 10, 1902, p. 584. The Rev. C. F. Hillman referred to Schleiermacher as "one of the greatest and most influential theologians of modern times" ("A Philosophical Study of Religion," EM, September 30, 1896, p. 625).



S. J. GAMERTSFELDER

(Courtesy of Miss Ruth Gamertsfelder, Naperville, Illinois)

from North-Western College. The West Salem campmeeting up in Wayne County, Ohio, provided him with a wife, Samuel Spreng's sister Emma. After serving for eight years as assistant editor of the Messenger under his brother-in-law, Gamertsfelder moved to Naperville in 1895, where he taught theology for the next twenty-eight years. Champion scythe-swinger in his youth back on the Ohio farm ("None could swing a scythe like Solomon."), he devoted his energies almost monastically to the seminary. He kept his tall and slender frame in shape by walking a mile and a half each day to get the mail in downtown Naperville.[1] Later in life a stomach ulcer slowed him down only slightly. He faithfully prepared the doctor's prescription of raw hamburgers each day (and an occasional raw and dried lining of chicken gizzard) and went on about his tasks as theological instructor. Revival meetings and campmeetings held little attraction for him in his mature years, and he used the press of seminary duties as an excuse for absenting himself. Consistently enough, he did not compel his five children to go, either. Unhampered by the necessity for much personal counselling of seminary students, Gamertsfelder was able by diligent labor to prepare his lectures for publication. At first the Evangelical publishers rejected his manuscript because of its liberalism, but this was not a serious obstacle. He confided to his daughter that he was able to make it acceptable merely by changing a few strategic words here and there.

Unable to spend protracted periods of time in study, his training was a composite of summer school courses at Harvard, Chicago, and Chautauqua; a correspondence course in Hebrew with William Rainey Harper; and eventually a Ph.D. from the University of Wooster in Ohio in 1903. His experiences in

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[1]He bemoaned the advent of home delivery, for it deprived him of his exercise (Personal interview with Ruth and Gordon Gamertsfelder, January 5, 1966).

the summer of 1906, however, may have been the most important training he received. He went to Germany to study theology, and what he heard and saw became a transforming experience for him. After a week of lectures at Tübingen by such men as Buder, Grill, Gottschick, Haering, Adolf Schlatter, Julius Müller, and Karl Holl, Gamertsfelder wrote back to the Messenger to report that things were different than in the days of F. C. Baur:

> I am convinced that the wholesale criticisms of the Evangelical Theological Faculties of Germany that many for want of more light and better understanding delight to indulge in, are not founded on the truth. We do not ascribe to these learned men infallibility; this quality can not be found among the sons of men to-day, nor in the Christian Church as a body in any age.[1]

The following week appeared his report from Berlin. There he had heard the lectures of Seeberg, Kaftan, and Harnack. Seeberg he described as "the most prominent representative of conservative theology in Berlin," and Kaftan as a Ritschlian. He heard Harnack on the subjects of the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the divine sonship of Jesus, and he described the setting for the lectures and the students' response to him. Obviously this first-hand exposure to German theologians had brought an immense change in his attitude towards them:

> I considered it a rare privilege to hear from their own lips men whom I often misjudged because I had seen them only through the eyes of the critics. While I am not willing to accept as the truth all these great men offer to the world, I am sure that I shall in the future read the adverse criticisms on German theologians with more sympathy than I ever did before.[2]

United Brethren also had learned to do more than hurl epithets at German theology. Professor J. P. Landis, who later became dean and then

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[1] EM, September 12, 1906, p. 10.

[2] EM, September 19, 1906, p. 10. Gamertsfelder reveals his higher estimation of German theologians by his references to many of them in his Systematic Theology (Cleveland, Ohio: Printed for the Author by C. Hauser, Agent, 1913). When the Messenger reported in 1908 that Deissmann and Drews had been appointed to posts at Berlin and Halle, it was done with a greater

president of the United Brethren seminary, was surprisingly generous in his acceptance and praise of Schleiermacher, his successors, and other contemporary German theologians. In discussing the providential reaction against rationalism, he wrote:

> Not a vestige of inspiration, of miracle, or prophecy was left. In short, all supernaturalism in revelation and in religion had been, it was thought, buried out of sight. Still again God remembered this poor, struggling, battling world. He introduced a reaction through Schleiermacher at Halle and Berlin, which was greatly advanced by the godly Neander. These men were followed by a troop of strong, learned, pious men, such as Nitzsch, Twesten, Lücke, Ullmann, Tholuck, Olshausen, Julius Müller, Dorner, Hengstenberg, Delitzsch, and others, who have not only, like Schleiermacher, given rationalism "a black eye," but, like Hercules in the struggle with the dragon, have crushed its head.[1]

In opposing Ritschlianism A. W. Drury, Landis's colleague, presents the reasons why it conflicts with his own views, but he treats it as though German theologians deserve a fair hearing.[2]

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sense of involvement and personal loss than before; the editor had hoped for conservatives to be appointed to the places of Weiss and Hering (EM, August 26, 1908, p. 3). Bucks assumes that his readers are concerned to know about Drews' contention that Christ never lived (EM, August 3, 1910, p. 3). In 1925 Julius Richter of the University of Berlin came to Evangelical Theological Seminary to lecture (EM, June 27, 1925, pp. 11-12).

[1]J. P. Landis, "The Triumphs of Christianity," QR, VIII (January, 1897), 25. In the Quarterly Review appeared a review of Harnack's Das Wesen des Christentum which was favorable. Probably written by the editor, H. A. Thompson, it reported that "it is a fresh and clear presentation of important phases of Christianity by an accomplished scholar, and will be a good addition to every theological library" (QR, XIII [January, 1902], 62).

[2]A. W. Drury, Outlines of Doctrinal Theology (Dayton, Ohio: The Otterbein Press, 1914), pp. 9-10. A native of Iowa, Drury joined the faculty of Union Biblical Seminary in 1880 as Professor of Church History. After 1892 he taught systematic theology. He deserves his reputation as the most distinguished historian of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ. His greatest literary contributions were his biography of Otterbein and his general history of the denomination.

Liberal Leadership among Evangelicals and United Brethren

Although never in the majority, liberal voices did make themselves heard--men who grew impatient with the received dogma of the fathers. Even such a pillar of orthodoxy as Bishop Dubs of the Evangelicals had had his liberal moments, according to his friend, the Rev. William Caton. Writing on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of Dubs' entrance into the ministry, Caton referred to the early years of his friend's ministry:

> During these years an insatiable thirst for knowledge made the young preacher an almost omnivorous reader, and his independence of thought led him out continually into the newest fields of investigation, and caused many of his friends to tremble for his orthodoxy. His was a mind that could not rest upon the dogmatic statements of the fathers. These must be investigated, and the principles upon which they rest must be made clear to his own mind.[1]

Bishops Hott, Mills, and Bell of the United Brethren frequently expressed liberal sentiments.[2] Mills was widely known as being on the liberal side of almost every question,[3] and in one of his widely-given addresses, Bishop Bell warned that "in the transitions just ahead the conservative elements and forces that always resist any movement toward adaptation or new alignment must be reckoned with, but never feared."[4]

A. E. Hangen was a liberal leader among United Evangelicals. Editor of The Evangelical after H. B. Hartzler's death in 1920 and associate editor of the Evangelical Messenger in the united church after 1922, Hangen

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[1] TE, July 26, 1905, p. 469.

[2] On one occasion Hott asserted that the miracles of Christ do not have to be defended, for they are not "the central point in Christianity;" compared to Christ "they appear hardly essential elements." (J. W. Hott, "The Church's Weapons in the Twentieth Century," QR, X [April, 1899], 170).

[3] W. R. Funk, Life of Bishop J. S. Mills, D.D. (Dayton, Ohio: The Otterbein Press, 1913), pp. 130, 133.

[4] William Melvin Bell, Torches Aloft (Dayton, Ohio: The Otterbein Press, 1914), p. 35.

had a proclivity "towards the more liberal school in politics, philosophy and religion."[1]

Representative of those who were becoming imbued with liberal sentiments in the Evangelical Church was the Rev. William E. Grote, recipient of degrees in theology from Evangelical Theological Seminary and McCormick Theological Seminary, pastor of First Church, Naperville, and minister to North Central College students. In one of his sermons he epitomizes the liberal's professed openness to new ideas and eagerness for growth in understanding:

> I want a faith that goes forward. As I yearn for a growing mind and a developing personality, so I long for a faith that keeps going, enlarging, strengthening. I want progress in my spiritual life. . . .
> I want a progressive faith in the Person of Christ. . . .
> I want an open mind that will discriminately study all the contributions that the scientist, the archeologist, the Egyptologist can make to better interpret his Word, that through these researches and discoveries, I may have a better understanding of, a clearer conception of, and an enlarged faith in Christ.[2]

One sure sign of openness to liberal sentiments was the use of the phrase: "fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man." Two Evangelicals who employ these terms freely are G. J. Kirn and C. A. Mock. Kirn, who was appointed to the new chair of Apologetics and English Bible at Union Biblical Institute in 1908,[3] asserted that "the mission of Christ was to teach the supreme lesson of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man."[4] C. A. Mock, whose orthodoxy Bishop Dubs had defended when Mock went to Western Union College via Yale to become the president in 1911, likewise

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[1] EM, June 29, 1929, p. 2.

[2] William E. Grote, "Progressive Faith for a Changing World," EM, December 27, 1930, pp. 6-9.

[3] EM, November 4, 1908, p. 12.

[4] G. J. Kirn, "Man His Own Prophet," EM, October 15, 1902, pp. 657-58.

identifies "the divine Fatherhood" as the central idea of the teaching of Christ and the idea of brotherhood as its correlative.[1] The United Brethren bishop, E. B. Kephart, also uses this slogan of liberalism.[2] Evangelical liberalism was gaining listeners, if not adherents, among Evangelical and United Brethren leaders.

Importance of Education

The greater place which education came to have in the lives of Evangelicals and United Brethren could hardly fail to affect their attitudes towards theological method. Greater exposure to the intellectual and cultural currents of the times encouraged them to modify the accepted pattern of learning modern ideas only in order to refute them.

Among United Brethren the life of Bishop J. S. Mills provided the most persuasive case for the value of education. From his youth he had an insatiable intellectual curiosity which drove him to read and study incessantly, though he was denied higher education at the usual age. He studied Greek while working on his father's farm as a youth after finishing the courses offered in the nearby primary schools and academy. After several years of pastoral work in Ohio, he went to New York City in 1872, where he spent a year in study. When he was twenty-six years old, he became pastor of the college church at Westerville, Ohio. For half of his six-year stay

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[1] C. A. Mock, "Social Teachings," TE, April 3, 1912, p. 210. In 1934 Mock became professor of Systematic Theology at the Evangelical School of Theology in Reading, Pennsylvania, after serving four years as associate editor of the Evangelical Messenger (Albright, p. 392). The Rev. J. Alfred Nansen, in a radio talk on the teachings of Jesus, uses most of the catchwords of liberalism; the liberal's optimism is evident in his hope that "as increasing numbers of individuals submit themselves to 'the rule of God,' peace and good will shall accrue to humanity" (EM, February 26, 1927, pp. 6-7).

[2] E. B. Kephart, Apologetics, or A Treatise on Christian Evidences (Dayton, Ohio: United Brethren Publishing House, 1901), p. 111.

he himself was enrolled at Otterbein University. Later he was a student (probably by correspondence) at Illinois Wesleyan University for four years, at the conclusion of which he received the degrees of bachelor of philosophy, master of arts, and doctor of philosophy. In addition, he took a three-years' course in the Chautauqua University of Theology. Privately he pursued his own well-organized courses in philosophy, sociology, phrenology, Christian evidences, and literature. He also taught himself German, French, Italian, and Spanish well enough to read all four. He spent six years at Western College, Toledo, Iowa, in the various capacities of professor of English, professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy, and later as President before his election to the bishopric in 1893. Both by his example and by his public addresses he stressed the need for United Brethren to have a college education, preferably acquired at the denomination's own colleges. He contended that the church "can meet cultured skepticism only by the culture and experience of believers."[1]

Editor I. L. Kephart of the Telescope was another ardent defender of the harmony between scholarship and Christian faith. Kephart did not learn more than reading, writing, and arithmetic until he was twenty-three, but he had a thirst for knowledge that sent him on through academy and Otterbein University. Eventually he became president of Westfield College in Illinois, from which position he moved to Dayton to become editor of the Telescope in 1889.[2]

Interest in education continued to rise among Evangelicals, also.

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[1]Funk, p. 123, passim.

[2]Drury, History, pp. 483, 568. See I. L. Kephart, "Scholarship and Christianity," RT, February 10, 1892, pp. 81-82.

As an argument for entering seminary, Dean J. P. Landis appealed to the example of prominent revivalists such as Chapman, Finney, Dwight, and

Their participation in the World Parliament of Religions in 1893 had re-emphasized for them the importance of education. Editor Spreng mentioned that he had heard "educated heathen" ridicule the idea of sending illiterate men to convert them to the Christian religion.[1] The Rev. J. B. Kanaga tried to shame his fellow Evangelicals into a greater appreciation of education by confessing his humiliation because after an entire century of denominational existence not a single volume of sermons in English had been produced by an Evangelical minister.[2]

Among United Evangelicals the old argument for higher education--that it was needed in order to refute skepticism and protect against various other forms of unbelief--had greater viability than in the other two denominations.[3] Regardless of whether it was this argument or another, men were seeking higher education and theological training. A rash of advanced degrees began to appear. Some of them were Ph.D.'s from such schools as the National University of Chicago; Richmond College, Ohio; Illinois Wesleyan; and Wooster College in Ohio.[4]

With the division of the Evangelical Association in 1891-94 the United Evangelical Church faced an educational crisis, for all but one of the educational institutions were in the possession of the Association. To

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Torrey, all of whom had had thorough education. There is no incompatibility, said Landis, between true culture and piety (RT, August 12, 1908, p. 16). That Landis should appeal to these men indicates the esteem United Brethren had for revivalists.

[1] EM, October 10, 1893, p. 648.

[2] J. B. Kanaga, "Sermonic Literature," EM, September 12, 1900, p. 577.

[3] See I. U. Royer's "Preparation and Delivery of Sermons," TE, October 22, 1890, p. 337. Also see the report of Pittsburg Conference Proceedings in TE, September 26, 1906, p. 620.

[4] See TE, June 16, 1897, p. 188; TE, August 15, 1906, p. 520.

meet this need they founded two new colleges: Albright at Myerstown, Pennsylvania, and Western Union (now Westmar) in Iowa. Both faced financial problems, particularly the school in Iowa because of the smaller membership of the church in the West. Bishop Rudolph Dubs devoted considerable time and energy trying to enlist interest and support for both colleges.[1]

At the time of church division the loss of the seminary at Naperville was even more serious than losing control of several of the colleges, for it sent theological students outside the denomination for training. In 1910 Bishop Dubs made an impassioned plea for a denominational seminary,[2] but there simply was not enough money. Shortly thereafter Albright College announced the establishment of a post-graduate theological department, but its opening was deferred for financial reasons.[3] In 1912 an Illinois minister, F. R. Blakely, called for the establishment of theological departments at Western Union and Albright Colleges until United Evangelicals could maintain a separate theological school.[4] The East Pennsylvania Conference, however, had already taken action to recognize the Bible Teachers' Training School of New York (later Biblical Theological Seminary) as an approved school for theological training.[5] This could hardly be of practical value to the church in the West, so Western Union College instituted a Department of Theology and Religious Education in 1913.[6] Even the mission in China

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[1] See the 1908 and 1909 issues of The Evangelical for an extended series of article by Dubs on "Our Colleges."

[2] TE, September 21, 1910, pp. 594-595.

[3] TE, November 30, 1910, pp. 760-61; "Proceedings of the East Pennsylvania Conference," TE, March 1, 1911, pp. 131, 136-37.

[4] TE, August 7, 1912, p. 498. [5] TE, May 8, 1912, pp. 290-91.

[6] TE, July 2, 1913, p. 6.

under the leadership of C. Newton Dubs became involved in a project of theological education; in this they cooperated with other denominations.[1]

The Place of Philosophy

Inasmuch as the philosophical currents of metaphysical idealism (especially personalism) provided a significant portion of the foundations of evangelical liberalism, the extent to which Evangelicals and United Brethren were interested in and open to philosophical inquiry provides an indicator of the directions in which they were moving in understanding their theological task as a church.

Among United Evangelicals, who resisted theological liberalism most strongly, the old prejudice against philosophy and intellectual sophistication in general appears most prominently. The Evangelical compared the "glowing effusions of truth" in a volume of Wesley's sermons with the "dull discourses on philosophy, . . . the metaphysical reasoning, and the mystical divinity of Aristotle, Xenophon, and Plato, and their followers down the ages."[2] In memorial sketches for two of his ministerial friends, Bishop Dubs extolled them as students of the Bible, not speculative theologians nor metaphysicians, not dabblers in the "fine-spun theories of modern philosophers."[3] Editor H. B. Hartzler contributed to this mood by his comment on Josh Billings' statement of faith in the Bible:

> Some people stumble at the Bible and reject it because some things in it are beyond the comprehension of their little brains. "Josh Billings" had more sense. He said: "I believe the Bible, all of it! The

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[1] TE, October 16, 1912, p. 660; TE, October 13, 1915, p. 22.

[2] TE, October 29, 1890, p. 345.

[3] TE, May 1, 1895, p. 141; TE, January 28, 1901, p. 29.

very things I don't understand I believe the most of all. I wouldn't exchange my faith for any man's knowledge."[1]

Reason was an unreliable guide in the realm of religion; philosophy must not be allowed to usurp the place of revelation.

The embrace of Common-Sense Philosophy in the seventies and eighties, however, was too wholehearted to allow them to turn their backs on philosophy in toto. Although one effect of the Scottish Philosophy was to produce a sort of moratorium on serious philosophical investigation, Evangelicals and United Brethren could not ignore all philosophical discussion, especially developments which provided a challenge to the accepted philosophical viewpoint. Scottish Philosophy had been a valuable apologetic in the battle against atheism and agnosticism, a far too valuable ally to allow to die by neglect or under the attack of a rising opposition.[2]

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[1] TE, September 2, 1901, p. 273. Also see Bishop Heil's derogation of "speculative theology" reported in TE, July 30, 1903, p. 484. Cf. the comments of Bishop Thomas Bowman in The Great Salvation (Cleveland, Ohio: Publishing House of the Evangelical Association, 1909), p. 72, on the importance of relying on the Bible for the doctrine of sanctification, not on metaphysical theories. Cf. the testimony of E. Howard Cadle at the 1921 United Brethren General Conference (GCJUB, 1921, p. 439). Also see N. Schupp, "Influence of German Theology," EM, April 29, 1896, p. 273; B. R. Schultze, "The Most Important Signs of Our Times," TE, August 9, 1893, pp. 249-250.

[2] The United Brethren Quarterly Review, which gave considerable space to articles on philosophical subjects, was given a rousing recommendation by J. B. Kanaga of the Evangelicals (EM, September 18, 1894, p. 596).

S. J. Gamertsfelder, professor of theology at Union Biblical Institute at Naperville, Illinois, strongly advocated the careful study of philosophy:

> "All departments of theology, including even biblical theology, are shaped, more or less, by some system of philosophy. If then, we would follow intelligently any system of divinity, we should be able to understand what system of philosophy the author favors. Many a critical point in theology is clarified by the discovery that the writer's views are biased by his philosophy.
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> True philosophy and genuine religion are in perfect accord. God does not require faith in an irrational doctrine. Faithful study and true piety will qualify us to give a reason for the hope that is in us. . . . It must be admitted that atheism, materialism, and skepticism

The continuing commitment to Common Sense Philosophy is almost too obvious to require documentation.[1] It was a philosophy that provided the perfect buttress to a gospel of assurance. However, its apriorism made its adherents and defenders vulnerable to the newer metaphysical idealisms mediated to Americans by the Cairds, the Boston personalists, and others. Although these newer philosophies were nourishing the rise of theological liberalism, they were attractive because they offered the appearance of being even more valuable apologetic tools for the communication of the Christian faith than Scottish Philosophy had been.

Interest in these newer viewpoints is especially marked in G. J. Kirn, Dean and Professor of Philosophy at North-Western College. In an article written for popular consumption he attempted to show that the God of whom

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have suffered their most humiliating defeats at the hands of those defenders of God's truth who winged their darts with sound philosophy" ("Philosophy and Theology," EM, January 6, 1897, p. 10).

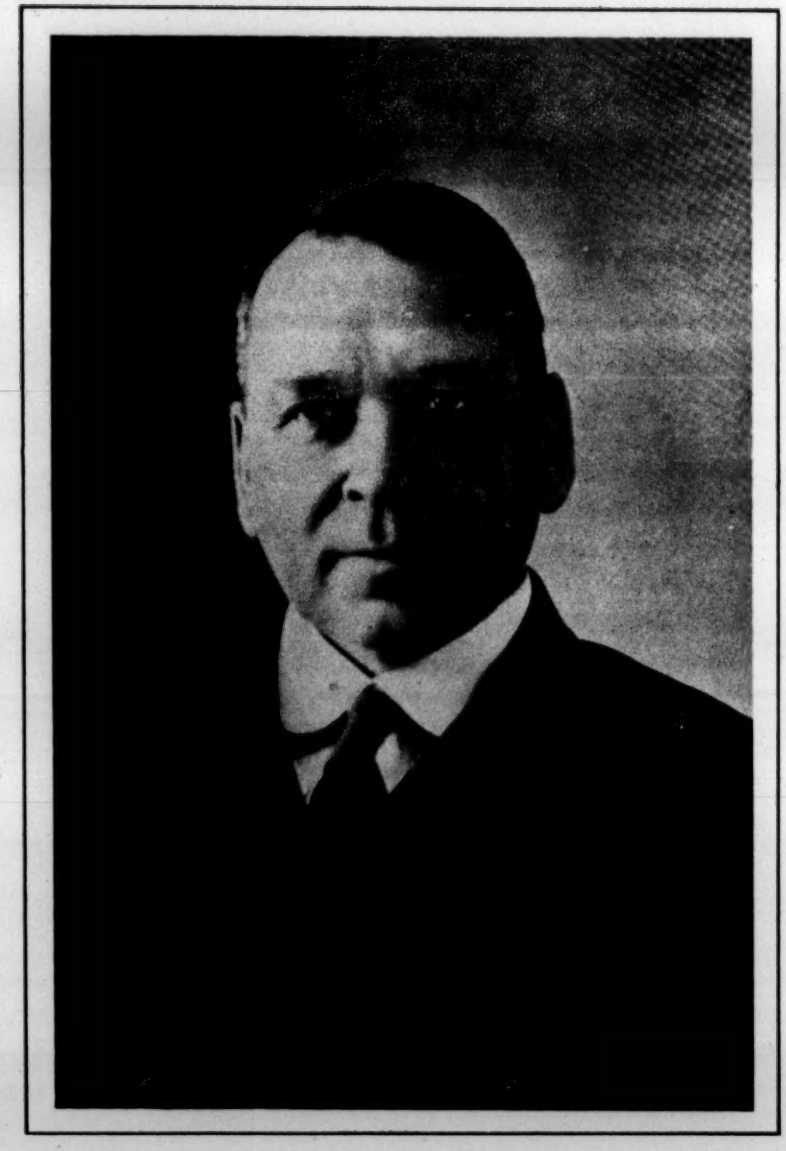
In his Systematic Theology Gamertsfelder wrote:

"We should not ignore the study of metaphysics, because it leads to a better understanding of the basal facts of Christian experience. A teacher of the Christian religion or a preacher of the Gospel who sneers at metaphysics or philosophy, as though it were a fog-bank in which only fools risk their lives, is simply playing in the hands of unbelievers and is discarding one of the most effective weapons of self-defense" (pp. 78-79).

See J. P. Landis, "How Can Philosophy Aid the Science of Religion?" QR, V (April, 1894), 121-34; J. S. Mills, "Philosophy," QR, V (October, 1894), 359-62; Dr. R. R. Butterwick, frequent contributor to the Telescope, was professor of philosophy at Lebanon Valley College (RT, October 1, 1921, p. 19).

[1]See A. W. Drury, Faith and Knowledge, an address delivered September 7, 1892, at Union Biblical Seminary (Dayton, Ohio: United Brethren Publishing House, 1893). The address also appears in QR, IV (January, 1893), 1-21.

Also see S. J. Gamertsfelder, Systematic Theology, pp. 47, 153; J. S. Mills, "Watson's Institutes," QR, I (January, 1890), 33-46; George P. Hott, "Progress of Ethical Science," QR, I (January, 1890), 65-74; J. A. McDermad, "Validity of Our Knowledge," QR, I (July, 1890), 224-232; Review of Supernatural Revelation, by C. M. Mead, QR, II (January, 1891), 77-80; Review of The Prevailing Types of Philosophy, by James McCosh, QR, II (April, 1891), 192; T. J. Sanders, "Transcendentalism," QR, II (October,



G. J. KIRN

(North-Western College Spectrum, 1914 – Courtesy of College-Seminary Library, Naperville, Illinois)

the new philosophies spoke was indeed identical with the Christ of the gospel.[1] Kirn's break with Scottish Philosophy is clear in his analysis of faith:

> Faith is not valuable because it gives assent to certain facts. It must be dynamic. An individual may believe in the inspiration of the Scriptures and be no better a man for the reason of that faith. A man may give credence to the story of Noah and the flood and to that of Jonah and the fish and still be as far from moral and spiritual life as though he believed them not. It is this caricature of faith that infidelity has been so successful in combating. . . . Faith is not a peculiarity of religion it is the fundamental basis of all science. . . . Faith in order to be faith dare not be formal, it must be dynamic. . . . The Christian is not arbitrarily saved by God because he honors God in believing. He is saved because his faith makes certain facts and principles operative upon his character and life. Faith is effective because it holds eternal realities in such relation to the soul that an eternal relationship to such truths is established. Faith in the inspiration of the Bible is potent because it brings the truthful contents of that book into vital relationship to the believer.[2]

Kirn, Gamertsfelder, and Bishop Mills all acknowledged their indebtedness to personalism.[3] In their openness to new currents of philosophical thought these men were exceptions. The majority remained committed to the tenets of Scottish Philosophy, although most men probably did not know whence their way of looking at the world originated.

1891), 308-309; Samuel P. Spreng, The Sinner and His Saviour (Cleveland, Ohio: Publishing House of the Evangelical Association, 1906), p. 11; Samuel P. Spreng, What Evangelicals Believe (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: The Evangelical Publishing House, 1929), pp. 11, 41.

Cf. I. L. Kephart's editorial note in RT, May 6, 1891, p. 273: "The human mind recognizes the fact that self-evident truth is true everywhere and at all times."

[1]G. J. Kirn, "Theism and the Christ of the Gospels," EM, February 2, 1898, p. 65.

[2]G. J. Kirn, "The Dynamics of Faith," EM, February 14, 1900, p. 97.

[3]Gamertsfelder, Systematic Theology, p. 35; G. J. Kirn, Religion a Rational Demand (Cleveland, Ohio: Press of Thomas and Mattill, 1900), pp. 30, 58, 88; J. S. Mills, "The New Psychology," QR, X (April, 1899), 97-104. W. O. Krohn refers to the "rational necessity" of a Personal Absolute in his "Nature of the So-Called Proofs for the Being of God," QR, II (April, 1891), 109.

Revision of Traditional Education and Evangelism

One measure of the influence of evangelical liberalism is the interest which was shown in new approaches to the educational and evangelistic tasks of the church. As early as 1903 George Albert Coe was introducing United Brethren to "The New Era in Religious Education."[1] The following year L. F. John reported on the second meeting of the Religious Education Association, which he had attended.[2] His support for the new movement was vigorous and clear;[3] he stood on the liberal side of most issues. As college pastor at Otterbein at the turn of the century and later a professor at Lebanon Valley, his liberal voice was persuasive among the youth of the church.

In 1912 the seminary in Dayton sponsored a series of lectures devoted to the theme of religious education.[4] When Professor W. A. Weber delivered an address on "An Educational Ministry" at the opening of the school year of Bonebrake Seminary in 1912, Weber's views reportedly "followed quite closely the outlines of Gladden, Coe, and Faunce, all of whom, with others of equal prominence, were quoted."[5] The 1919 session of the General Conference of the Evangelical Association also showed some openness to the ideas of the religious education movement. In calling for a more thorough and sustained effort to indoctrinate both old and young "in the principles of the Christian religion," it recognized that "this program must be in line with modern conceptions of education and clothed in the living language of

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[1] RT, February 18, 1903, pp. 200-201. [2] RT, March 16, 1904, pp. 332-33.

[3] L. F. John, "The Demands of the Hour for Improved Educational Methods in Religion," QR, XVII (July-August, 1906), 212-216.

[4] RT, March 13, 1912, p. 18.

[5] "The Seminary," RT, September 18, 1912, p. 4.

to-day and not in the archaic, time-honored but moth-eaten phrases of buried ages."[1]

The search for an alternative to the old method of revivalistic evangelism is evident in several prominent leaders of the twenties. Appealing to the coming General Conference, J. Gordon Howard (later a bishop) called for an expansion of the concept and method of evangelism. Howard expressed the hope that "the result will be comprehensive and all-inclusive, and that year-round attention to personal work, stewardship of life, progressing Christian experience, enlistment of others in Christian service and giving, careful Christian nurture through the Church's agencies for children and youth, along with periodic evangelistic meetings, all will find their deserved places as essential phases of our total evangelistic mission."[2] In 1930 Dr. Charles R. Zahniser, special lecturer for the Federal Council of Churches, appeared at the seminary at Naperville to speak on the topic, "A Scientific Approach to the Task of Evangelism."[3] The same year Bishop John Stamm, former professor of Systematic Theology at Evangelical Theological Seminary, published a book on evangelism. In this book, which soon became required reading for men training for the ministry, Stamm tried to extend the term "evangelism" beyond its customary usage. He warned against classifying people rigidly into classes of backsliders, unbelievers, and doubters, for "no person fits wholly into one class."[4] Stamm reinterpreted

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[1] GCJEA, 1919, p. 22.

[2] J. Gordon Howard, "What Is 'Evangelism'?" RT, April 6, 1929, pp. 6-7.

[3] EM, February 8, 1930, p. 16.

[4] John S. Stamm, Evangelism and Christian Experience (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Board of Publication, Evangelical Church, 1930), p. 158.

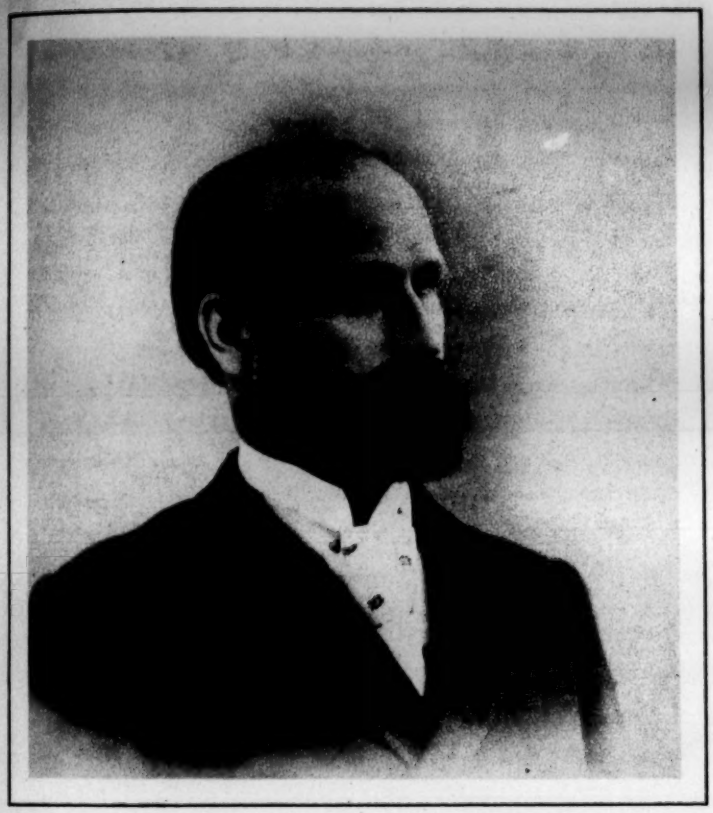
evangelism to make it mean an attitude rather than a series of meetings or a method limited to one period of life or one season of the year. Eventually Stamm's book had a marked effect upon the pattern of Evangelicals' church life, for it bore the official approval of the denomination.

The encounter with theological liberalism resulted in a gradual modification in approach to theological inquiry. Noteworthy, of course, was the fact that some leaders were willing to think seriously about the new currents of thought abroad in the world. But even more significant is the fact that the liberalism which some men both confronted and accepted bore within it the rational justification for continuing such a pattern of receptivity to new ideas. Such openness was an inescapable implication of the doctrines of divine immanence and tolerance. To these and other liberal doctrines we now turn.

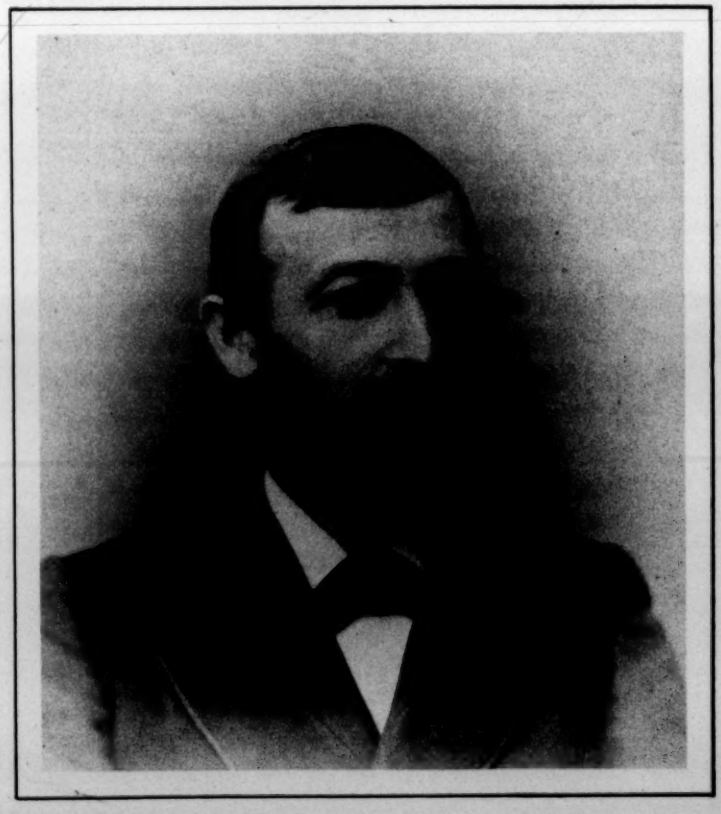
XI. THE DOCTRINES OF LIBERALISM

Introduction

The delineation of interest in liberalism among Evangelicals and United Brethren would be far easier if there had been one or more leaders who consciously adopted its tenets and utilized them to erect a theological system. The effect of liberalism, however, was not that direct and overt. Associated recurrently with liberal ideas are the names of such United Brethren leaders as J. W. Etter of the Quarterly Review, I. L. Kephart of the Telescope, and Bishops J. S. Mills, E. B. Kephart, J. W. Hott, and William Bell. Among Evangelicals familiar names are S. J. Gamertsfelder of Evangelical Theological Seminary and Dean G. J. Kirn of North-Western College. A. E. Hangen of The Evangelical and C. A. Mock, President of Western Union College, were liberal voices among United Evangelicals. None of these men, however, consciously embraced evangelical liberalism without reservation. Even Gamertsfelder wrote his Systematic Theology from within the mainstream of Evangelicals' tradition. Although he employed such fundamentally liberal ideas as grounding theological statements in Christian experience, he did not consistently follow them and their implications in the various parts of his system. Therefore, in analyzing the impact of liberalism upon Evangelicals and United Brethren one is compelled to look for the appearance of liberal ideas scattered here and there throughout their literary expressions. The method followed here is to explore these writings in order to ascertain the impact which the central themes of evangelical liberalism had upon the understanding of theology's method and task.



J. S. MILLS
(Courtesy of The Historical Society of The Evangelical United Brethren Church, the Rev. John H. Ness, Jr., Curator)



J. W. ETTER
(Courtesy of The Historical Society of The Evangelical United Brethren Church, the Rev. John H. Ness, Jr., Curator)

Tentativeness

One of the most important marks--and sources--of liberal theology was the spirit of tentativeness. It is an attitude based on the conviction that what is basic in religion is experience, but that ideas change as the social and intellectual climates vary. The result is to reduce the seriousness of the doctrinal differences which divide denominations and theological parties.[1] This mood of tentativeness becomes evident in Evangelicals and United Brethren, and it eventually has an effect on their conceptions of the place and purposes and method of theology.

One factor in this new attitude was the acceptance of changes in theology as something to be expected.[2] In various ways men confessed, as A. W. Drury put it, that "the old confidence that final results in theology are attainable has been badly shattered."[3] United Brethren had begun to appreciate this at the time when they revised their own creed in 1889. J. W. Etter had justified the action of the General Conference by asserting that "creed-making and creed-repairing is a normal accommodation to theological growth in obedience to a divine law which decrees that Bible knowledge shall increase as the thoughts of to-morrow shall transcend the thoughts of to-day."[4] Etter contended that although a creed should be respected and even protected by restrictive rules, "when it has served its

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[1] Cauthen, pp. 24-25.

[2] Dr. W. O. Krohn, a United Brethren who was Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy at Western Reserve University, illustrated the transient quality of theological systems by confessing that his study of Butler's Analogy had proved to be "more of a hindrance than a help in the search for a good logical ground" for belief in God ("Nature of the So-Called Proofs for the Being of God," QR, II [April, 1891], 102).

[3] Drury, Outlines of Doctrinal Theology, p. 9.

[4] J. W. Etter, "Creed Revision," QR, I (April, 1890), 190.

purpose and needs recasting let us revise without any such superstitious fear that to tamper with an honored creed is like 'touching the ark of God.'"[1] A creed must serve "man's free intellect" and not the reverse.

Editor Kephart of the Telescope sounded a similar note the same year, appealing to the "law of progress" to justify changes in theology and creed. "The decision of the past, however good," wrote Kephart, "as to the truth in matters relating to faith and practice have no binding force on men today unless they harmonize with revelation and reason as they appear in the light of modern research and scholarship."[2] Bishop J. S. Mills agreed with this viewpoint and went on to define the nature of Christian theology:

> Christianity as theology is the philosophical explanation and the scientific arrangement and statement of its doctrines. Man seeks to interpret and classify all his experiences and relations for the satisfaction of his own intellect and that of others. . . . This science is from its very nature progressive. It has to take account not only of the Christian life and consciousness, but of the existence, character, revealed will, and doings of God, the true nature of which can only be "known in part."[3]

In the bishops' address to the United Brethren General Conference of 1901 they confessed that theological emphases change with the times--that "as the Church faces new antagonists and new conditions of society, it must place emphasis upon those truths which will best meet the new environment."[4] Meanwhile, A. W. Drury was teaching theological students at Dayton that a theological education did not mean simply the learning of doctrines, but the development of the faculty for "theologizing."[5]

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[1]J. W. Etter, "Our Confession of Faith," QR, II (October, 1891), 368-369.

[2]I. L. Kephart, "Progress as Related to the Past and the Present," RT, July 15, 1891, pp. 433-434.

[3]J. S. Mills, "The Essence of Christianity," QR, VI (January, 1895), 35-36.

[4]GCJUB, 1901, p. 28. [5]Drury, Faith and Knowledge, p. 3.

Even among United Evangelicals, who in many respects tended to be the most conservative of these three denominations, some men were beginning to accept the tentative character of theology.[1] In a sermon which appeared in The Evangelical under the editorship of the liberal A. E. Hangen, the Rev. G. M. Ludwig points out the need to recognize the limitation of Christian theology. Although it is his considered conviction that Christianity has developed "the best explanation of the concepts, man, the universe, God, sin, etc., that has ever been conceived by the finite mind,"[2] Ludwig thinks that the great doctrines of the church have not yet been perfectly explained and looks for change in the form of theology, that is, in language, logic, creed, and ritual. Otherwise, theology would become obsolete.[3]

In the Evangelical Association Dean G. J. Kirn was asserting in true liberal fashion that Christ did not give us a set of established dogmas; instead, "theological conceptions expand as the soul expands, but the relation of the soul to God is forever the same."[4] Gamertsfelder introduces his book, which was substantially the lectures on doctrinal theology delivered before his students, by characterizing theology as "a growing science." Every age must formulate its own system of doctrine.[5]

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[1]Ammon Stapleton, the denominational historian, gave a paper at Central Pennsylvania Bible Conference in the summer of 1894 on "Revolutions in Theology" (TE, August 15, 1894, p. 261).

[2]G. M. Ludwig, "An Honest but Important Confession," TE, September 12, 1922, pp. 8-9.

[3]In "Credentials of a True Orthodoxy," EM, March 26, 1927, pp. 6-7, Dr. Charles Mock, president of Western Union College, indicates the changes which have occurred in the definitions of heresy and orthodoxy, showing that change is of the very nature of theology.

[4]G. J. Kirn, "Man His Own Prophet," EM, October 15, 1902, pp. 657-658.

[5]Gamertsfelder, Systematic Theology, p. vii.

This awareness that theological systems change was reinforced by a better knowledge of church history and by the acceptance of the principle of historical relativity.[1] Editor Kephart and A. W. Drury of the United Brethren and Gamertsfelder of the Evangelical Association had grasped this principle in the course of their study of church history. As early as 1891 Kephart was bold enough to present his views in an editorial:

> The decisions of the past . . . have no binding force on men to-day unless they harmonize with revelation and reason as they appear in the light of modern research and scholarship. . . . The present has greater light for the human mind, both from nature and revelation, than the past has ever had. Nature, however, has not changed, nor has the Bible. But men's interpretations of the principles and teachings in these two realms have by gradual and progressive unfoldings reached their present standard. The Gospel is what it always was, and it is more. . . . Until the end of time there will continue to be a progressive development of thought, doctrine, science, and philosophy. . . .
>
> . . . . The history of doctrine is a history of growth.
>
> It never was intended that any one age or people should know all the truth there is to be known concerning the kingdom of nature or the kingdom of grace, nor that principles of religious faith and practice accepted and obeyed at one time should be alike binding on all the future.[2]

Gamertsfelder was teaching his students at Naperville much the same thing--that "dogmas are the historic expressions of the state and progress of the religious life."[3]

This recognition of the historical relativity of all doctrines--their

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[1]See Cauthen, pp. 215ff. Bishop Dubs lectured at a United Evangelical Bible Conference in the summer of 1901 on the history of Christian doctrine (TE, June 17, 1901, p. 185). Another speaker at the same conference, the Rev. Edward Haines Kistler, A.M., delivered a lecture on the topic, "Dogmengeschichtliches Study of the Wages of Sin," in which he demonstrated some familiarity with the history of Christian doctrine, quoting Fisher, Pope, Seeberg, and Schaff (TE, August 26 through September 23, 1901, pp. 266, 274, 282, 290, 298).

[2]I. L. Kephart, "Progress as Related to the Past and the Present," RT, July 15, 1891, pp. 433-434.

[3]Gamertsfelder, Systematic Theology, p. 12. See A. W. Drury's address given at Union Biblical Seminary in 1900 ("The Progress of Doctrine," RT, September 19, 1900, pp. 1196-97, 1199). Also see Drury, Outlines of Doctrinal Theology, p. 39.

dependence upon the insight and comprehension of human minds for their form and much of their content--led numerous men to see that all theological expressions must necessarily fall short of the complete truth. Leaders in all three denominations stressed the inadequacy of human language to express divine truth perfectly. Creeds and other theological statements were important, but they fell far short of the complete explanation of divine revelation.[1]

Confessing that human ideas fall far short of the divine reality of which they speak was only a short step from believing that theology is not only incomplete, but sometimes mistaken.[2] Some United Brethren had gone this far as early as 1890, when the Rev. Z. A. Weidler, showing some familiarity with the history of Christian doctrine, asserted that "the works of the Fathers must be read and studied largely as controversial theology." In attempting to refute errors, they were sometimes "led in the heat of disputation to say things unfitly."[3]

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[1]See G. J. Kirn, "Practical Aspects of Religion, EM, July 12, 1905; R. R. Butterwick, "The Church's Task as an Educator," RT, July 21, 1928, pp. 6-7; D. B. Byers, "Truth Illimitable," TE, April 19, 1893, p. 121. E. Lewis Kessler, "The Mysterious in Religion," TE, May 16, 1894, p. 153. President J. F. Dunlap's inaugural address at Albright College, TE, February 2, 1910, pp. 65, 68-9; G. J. Kirn, "The Word of God," EM, April 2, 1902, p. 209; S. J. Gamertsfelder, "The Idea of God," EM, February 11, 1903, p. 81; "The Creed as a Symbol," EM, August 6, 1921, pp. 3-4; and S. P. Spreng, What Evangelicals Believe, p. 56. An article which The Evangelical took from the Pacific Christian Advocate stressed the contrast between Christ and doctrine, warning that "when we allow the doctrine to take Christ's place, the doctrine which is the shadow of the reality obscures the reality"(TE, May 23,1922,p.13).

[2]Willis Glover contrasts the older and newer views of the history of theology among Evangelical nonconformists in England. The orthodox conception recognized development in theology, but this was all a matter of a gradual revealing and clarification that was free from error. In the 1880's, though, the conviction developed that this was really an evolutionary teaching process in which "error and truth were bound to be mixed in the minds of the recipients of the revelation and therefore in their records of it" (Evangelical Nonconformists and Higher Criticism in the Nineteenth Century [London: Independent Press, Ltd., 1954], p. 106).

[3]Z. A. Weidler, "Authority of the Church Fathers," QR, I (October, 1890), 320. In commenting on the Preserved Smith heresy trial the Rev.

Albert S. Keister, a United Brethren who taught at the University of Chicago, was even more forthright about the mistakes of the past and the possible irrelevance of old doctrines:

> I see no reason why we should believe that the doctrines of our Church, formulated by our Church fathers, are any more inspired or any nearer the truth than the doctrines formulated by the fathers of some other churches. The men of all churches are tired of doctrinal disputes. . . . It is conceivable that the church doctrines, drawn up in an age when our people were living a simple, self-sufficing, agricultural life is an obstacle in the way of the church serving effectively the needs of a complex, inter-dependent, industrial society such as we live in today.[1]

Gamertsfelder, the Evangelical leader, was calling for a general recognition of the failures of theology, specifying the doctrine of atonement as one place where change was needed.[2] Another Evangelical, Harvey Moyer, wrote bluntly: "Creeds are at best but imperfect expressions of truth, often incomplete and mixed with error, since they are formulated by men who, as the apostle says, know only in part."[3]

If it is possible, even probable, that theologians of the past were at least partially in error, this must shape one's attitudes towards theological pronouncements. Gamertsfelder warned that the attitude of "a student of theology in our day toward the expressed doctrinal opinions of former

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F. P. Rosselot reminded his readers that the term "orthodoxy" was an exceedingly relative term whose definition changes with the years ("Orthodoxy," QR, VI [July, 1895], 217-218). Cf. F. A. Myers, "Morgue of Dogmatism," RT, October 2, 1918, pp. 6-7.

[1]Albert S. Keister, "College Teaching and the Ministry," RT, February 4, 1922, pp. 15-15. Also see editorial note in RT, February 8, 1893, p. 81.

[2]S. J. Gamertsfelder, "Cardinal Facts of Christianity," EM, January 25, 1905, p. 50. In his Systematic Theology he wrote: "History discloses not a few evident errors of theology in the past" (p. 13).

[3]Harvey Moyer, "The Indebtedness of the Church to Calvinism," EM, January 31, 1912, pp. 6-8.

periods should be that of a friendly inquirer."[1] Etter, the editor of the United Brethren's Quarterly Review, advised much the same approach. One cannot afford to play the dogmatist since it is so easy to fall into error.[2]

Tolerance

The spirit of tentativeness, nourished by the recognition of the historical relativity of theology, was the basis for the spirit of tolerance that characterized the liberal. If human ideas not only fall short of complete and comprehensive grasp of the divine but are also quite fallible, one must be tolerant of the theological expressions of others. This spirit was stronger among United Brethren than Evangelicals, at least in the earlier part of this period. United Brethren threw several bouquets in the direction of John W. Nevin, the Mercersburg theologian whom both they and Evangelicals had severely denounced back in the forties and fifties.[3] J. W. Etter could even see some good in the ignorance of most United Brethren with regard to their denominational Confession of Faith, for to his mind it had resulted in tolerance and a spirit of Christian unity.[4]

During the course of the Briggs heresy trials Editor Kephart was obviously sympathetic with the defendant.[5] He registered his dislike for

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[1] Gamertsfelder, Systematic Theology, p. 14.

[2] J. W. Etter, "The Higher Criticism," QR, V (April, 1894), 110-20.

[3] Supra, pp. 100-102, 120. A reviewer of Theodore Appel's biography of Nevin calls him "one of the few great theologians and thinkers of America," omitting criticism of him altogether (QR, I [July, 1890], 294). About three years later Editor I. L. Kephart quoted Nevin with approval regarding the way in which the Christian life begins (RT, April 12, 1893, p. 225).

[4] J. W. Etter, "Our Confession of Faith," QR, II (October, 1891), 373.

[5] Charles Briggs was a professor at Union Theological Seminary who offended many conservatives by his defense of modern Biblical scholarship

heresy-hunting in unambiguous language after quoting Coleridge's famous statement about the Bible "finding us:"

> Heresy and heresy hunting are alike distasteful to us; and from the latter we are very sure there comes to the Christian church far more harm than good. . . . When the accused is theologically sound on all the doctrines of the Gospel, and the truth or falsity of the accusations hinges on shades of meaning which may or may not be attached to certain words in which he has endeavored to express his views on debatable matters of opinion, then the suspected heretic should have the benefit of the doubt. Either this, or every member of the council that hears his case and votes for his acquittal should be promptly convicted with him. In the interests of our holy Christianity we hope that the time is near at hand when heresy hunters will appear only in museums, labeled "extinct species."[1]

When Presbyterian heresy hunters were tracking down Preserved Smith of Lane Theological Seminary, his plight likewise attracted the sympathy of some United Brethren. The Rev. A. E. Wright observed that in the present turmoil it seemed to be a matter, not of ridding the church of erroneous teachers, but of tightening the machinery of the church. Tolerance should be accorded one another, for even fully orthodox leaders do not agree on all the technical questions in philosophy and theology.[2] The Rev. F. P. Rosselot also called for tolerance of others, condemning the clergyman who was overheard to say to his companion while on the way to the trial of

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and his condemnation of the doctrine of the inerrancy of Scripture (Smith, Handy, Loetscher, II, 275-279).

[1] RT, December 28, 1892, p. 817. See editorial note in RT, November 11, 1891, p. 706. Also see J. W. Etter's review of Briggs's book, Whither, in QR, I (April, 1890), 192. When Briggs was tried before the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in 1893, Kephart reported that his statement was "clear, logical, and convincing, and it is said that in a most touching, eloquent peroration he declared, with uplifted hand and in the most solemn manner, his belief in the system of doctrine of the Confession of Faith, and saying that he had been teaching the Bible in Union Seminary for twenty years," challenging his hearers to name a minister who had been a pupil of his "who did not believe and love the Bible supremely" (RT, May 31, 1893, p. 339).

[2] A. E. Wright, "Church Trials," RT, November 1, 1893, p. 692.

Smith: "Yes he is Preserved Smith now, but he will be Pickled Smith when we get through with him."[1]

In the United Brethren General Conference of 1893 a lively discussion ensued upon the proposal to insert the words, "recognized orthodox," in the rule about other churches from which members could be received by letter of transfer. The Rev. C. J. Kephart (later a bishop) remarked that the word "orthodox" was susceptible of widely varying interpretation and that he did not want the responsibility of deciding upon orthodoxy. Agreeing with Kephart was a seventy-two-year-old pastor, the Rev. J. W. Fulkerson, who extemporaneously defended the liberal ideal of tolerance:

> But with Brother Kephart I cannot see how to define the word "orthodox." It is not in the Bible. Christ made no such test as that. Christ and his apostles gave the general outline of missionary work and of doctrine. . . . No man in this house can define clearly and distinctly the doctrine that Christ taught. It was promiscuous,--a little fling here and a little fling there, a little fling in the front, and a little fling in the rear, and a ray of light scattered in every direction. The nearer we live to God and the more consecrated the life of a man or a woman is outside of all faded creeds and faded faiths and faded practices, the nearer we become a man or a woman after Christ, the divine head. Let us stand by the truth as it is in Jesus and not have so much orthodoxy.[2]

W. J. Shuey objected strongly to Fulkerson's statement that "no living person could define the doctrine of Christ," an objection that gained general support. Fulkerson replied that he simply wanted "to carry as generous a heart and as sympathetic a nature and as grand a soul as a Christian man can carry for other churches and for all outside of my faith." W. M. Beardshear, who had been to Yale Divinity School, sided with Fulkerson, declaring that he believed that with regard to such matters as salvation and holiness, "you reach men better the less fuss you make about it, and the

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[1]F. P. Rosselot, "Orthodoxy," QR, VI (July, 1895), 217.

[2]GCJUB, 1893, pp. 174-180.

more your life and heart abound in you the better will be the results and the better effects you get; that the more you talk about orthodoxy and straightness the more crooked and warped you will become."[1] The upshot of the discussion was that they decided to change the wording to "other evangelical churches," for they agreed that their primary concern was to avoid recognizing Unitarian and Universalist churches as evangelical.

Throughout the nineties and on into the next decade several voices persistently pleaded for tolerance. Editor I. L. Kephart reminded his readers that "piety is an excellent thing, but it is not a guaranty of infallibility."[2] The Rev. J. W. Fulkerson, who had spoken on behalf of tolerance at General Conference, asserted that the theological student ought to have full freedom of inquiry and not be bound by commitments to certain creeds, statements of faith, or other expressions of theological truth.[3] Professor F. A. Myers was naively optimistic in his announcement that the "come-in-and-talk-it-over" period had fully come:

> The days of hot theological contentions and debates are historical; the days when theological sluggers pummeled their opponents into somnolency are passed with the jealous prejudice that actuated the linguistic acrobats; and now we kindly invite our neighbors, who may differ from us, to come in and talk it over; to come in, not to dispute or to mount the forum of general debate, but to obtain a clear and direct understanding of each other's views. . . .
>
> . . . And now it is universal brotherhood and one Fatherhood that is preached from all evangelical pulpits, and if a stranger was not told, he could not tell what denominational name preached the sermon.[4]

Of J. S. Mills, United Brethren bishop from 1893 to 1909, it was said that

> his coming was a sort of new era to us in the matter of preaching. He preached Christ more as a Savior and friend than as an enemy of sinners and an uncompromising and revengeful judge. . . . One of his favorite

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[1] Ibid. [2] RT, March 23, 1898, p. 353.

[3] J. W. Fulkerson, "Shall We Think?" RT, September 14, 1898, pp. 1160-1161.

[4] F. A. Myers, "Theological Love," RT, August 19, 1903, p. 1033.

hymns contained this stanza, "For the love of God is broader than the measure of man's mind And the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind."[1]

Bishop E. B. Kephart, who had been a leader in the liberal movement to revise the Constitution in 1889, asserted that tolerance should mark the attitude of the minister as he confronts new truth. He should be broad and liberal-minded and receptive to new ideas, for "openness and positiveness of mind are not incompatible."[2]

Although liberal voices were not numerous among Evangelicals, there were a few who boldly spoke out for tolerance. For some, tolerance gained attractiveness because of their encounters with Anglican and Roman Catholic dogmatism.[3] The Rev. J. B. Kanaga touched a sensitive subject when he called for tolerance even about the manner in which people are believed to become Christians. "It flavors not a little of narrowness and dogmatism," he wrote, "to insist either that regeneration is always gradual or instantaneous, or that sanctification is invariably one or the other." No absolute and invariable standard on this matter should be set up.[4]

What the seminary at Naperville was teaching is evident in the testimony of an alumnus who confessed that when he went to seminary he was worried lest the faith of the fathers be undermined by modern teachings.

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[1] Funk, p. 61.

[2] E. B. Kephart, "The Minister's Relation to Truth," QR, XVII (January-February, 1906), 4. In 1902 the Quarterly Review became a bi-monthly journal, changing its name to The United Brethren Review; in order to avoid confusion, it is consistently referred to as QR.

[3] "The Doctrinal Basis of Ecclesiastical Unity," EM, July 24, 1895, p. 472; J. B. Kanaga, "Present Status of Biblical Criticism," EM, September 30, 1896, p. 625; G. J. Kirn, "What Is Religion?" EM, January 14, 1914, p. 8.

[4] J. B. Kanaga, "Instantaneous Regeneration," RT, November 13, 1901, p. 1448.

> I was suspicious of any teaching which did not follow in the same line of thought which I considered to be truth. While here at the Seminary, I have come to see that truth is much broader than what I considered it to be. I have discovered that the best way to arrive at truth is to have an open mind toward all evidences, no matter what field they might come from, and a charitable heart towards all who have honest convictions.[1]

The editor was warm in his commendation of the Seminary for its ability to do this mind-stretching for its young men. He concluded the editorial in which he quoted this testimony by a surprisingly frank and personal confession of his own:

> The writer of this editorial knows what the young minister in question is talking about, for he himself went over that thorny road which he travels who wants to be loyal to the "faith of the fathers" and yet not reject what presents itself as truth, when it seems that there cannot be accord between the two. He knows the haunting fear that walks abroad in the watches of the night and stalks abroad at noonday, lest by having or being about to let in the light of a truth not before understood, he may be going back upon the faith by which the fathers lived and served and died.
>
> It was like the break of a day flooded with light and peace, when he saw for the first time in proper perspective: That all that is labeled "truth" need not, indeed, cannot, be accepted as truth; that the "faith of the fathers," while it has an absolute connotation and content to which the "children" must cling to be true to it, is a very elastic term, and subject to such a wide range of interpretations that he who would know what the phrase means is apt to be left confused with all of them before him.[2]

G. B. Kimmel, president of Evangelical Theological Seminary, in his reports to General Conference in 1926 and 1930, stressed that the spirit of tolerance and charity toward those who differ and the openness to truth from whatever source it may come characterized the standpoint and approach of the Seminary. He did not fail to mention that his school was also true to the denomination's articles of faith.[3] A sermon by the Rev. William

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[1] "'Truth' and 'The Faith,'" EM, August 22, 1925, p. 3.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Proceedings of the General Conference of the Evangelical Church, 1926, pp. 91-2; hereafter cited as GCJEC; Ibid., 1930, pp. 198-99.

Grote, graduate of the seminary in 1916, epitomizes the liberal's spirit of tolerance:

> I pray for an open mind, a tolerant attitude, a sympathetic spirit, lest I with my limitations become a stumbling block instead of a helpful friend who understands. God forbid that I should glory alone in the way in which the unchangeable Christ is leading me through a changing world. I glory also in the way in which he is leading others. . . . The "household of faith" is a big thing, and like the "mansions in heaven" there is lots of room.[1]

Comparative Religion

As Evangelicals and United Brethren joined other Protestants in a surge of foreign mission activity in the latter half of the nineteenth century, they were exposed to other world religions for the first time.[2] The World's Parliament of Religions held in connection with the World's Fair in Chicago in 1893 also furnished a stimulus to greater awareness of the non-Christian religions of the world.[3] Becoming aware of the brute fact that there are great numbers of the world's people who are not Christian could not fail to leave an impression.[4] Generally the reaction was one which was

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[1]William Grote, "Progressive Faith for a Changing World," EM, December 27, 1930, pp. 6-9. Cf. A. E. Hangen, "Avoiding Extremes," TE, August 15, 1922, pp. 4-5.

[2]These writings manifest a desire to take this new knowledge seriously: G. J. Kirn, "Biblical Ideals," EM, March 27, 1901, p. 193; "Bishops' Quadrennial Address," GCJUB, 1925, p. 9; Professor W. H. Klinefelter, "The Essential Elements of a Soul-Satisfying Religion," QR, I (October, 1890), 331-43; B. F. Fritz, "'Their Rock Is Not as Our Rock'--A Study in Comparative Religion," QR, IX (October, 1898), 347-59; RT, July 18, 1917, p. 2. Bishop C. J. Kephart began a series of articles on world religions in RT, April 10, 1926, pp. 6-7.

[3]See TE, October 18, 1893, pp. 329, 332; EM, September 26, 1893, pp. 612-13, 616-17; Rev. G. C. Knobel (ed.), The Congress of the Evangelical Association, A Complete Edition of the Papers Presented at its Sessions held at The Art Institute of Chicago, September 19-21, 1893 (Cleveland, Ohio: Thomas and Mattill, 1894).

[4]The Rev. S. P. Spreng, for instance, who was generally no liberal in his attitude towards other religions or even Roman Catholicism, was persuaded to refer to Archbishop Ireland's opening speech as "eloquent" (Ibid., p. 24).

shared by other American Protestants. They looked, studied, concluded that Christianity and western civilization were far superior, and proceeded to send missionaries in ever-increasing numbers to distant parts of the world. Editor Spreng's reaction to the World Parliament was typical of the majority of Evangelicals:

> Christianity knows both the strength and the weakness of heathen religions, as it never knew them before. Perhaps, too, in this fierce light its own weaknesses in its present form may have been exposed. But it is also clearer than ever, that no weaknesses are inherent in the Christian system. Heathenism paid unwitting tribute to the irresistible power and surpassing glory of the Christian religion, and verily caught visions of the matchless Christ, that made it mute with wonder. Nothing is clearer to-day, in the after glow of this glorious vision, than that heathenism is essentially doomed, and that Christianity is destined to be ultimately triumphant.[1]

Spreng's confidence was echoed by the United Evangelical bishop, W. M. Stanford, in his Dedicatory Address at Western Union College in 1901. Noting that the college would be a "safe" place for ministerial training, he went on casually to predict that Confucianism, Brahmanism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Shintoism and Mohammedanism have all "long since reached their zenith, and are now fast going down before the mighty onward sweep of Christianity."[2]

Editor Snyder of the Telescope put it even more strongly. It is improper to assign Christianity merely a place among the religions of the world. Even to affirm that it is superior to the others is insufficient

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[1] Ibid., p. 13.

[2] TE, October 21, 1901, pp. 330-31. Cf. the editorial reference in TE, August 2, 1911, p. 488, to "a most eloquent lecture" on "Christianity, the Final and Perfect Religion" at the Central Pennsylvania Bible Conference; "An Editorial on Fundamentals," EM, February 8, 1930, pp. 2-3; Anton Huelster, Miracles in the Light of Science and History (Chicago: Severinghaus Printing Company, n.d.), p. 164; E. B. Kephart, Apologetics, chap. x: "The Superiority of Christianity over Other Religions and Its Intrinsic Worth a Proof of Its Origin," pp. 147-156.

and does not provide an incentive for missionary activity.

> If it is only a question of good, better, and best, it implies the possibility of improving the non-Christian faith, so as to make it wholly acceptable. Christianity is not only better than the many non-Christian religions; it is "other" than the non-Christian faiths. It contains something nowhere else found--a divine element, a supernatural virtue, that removes the "stains" as well as the "guilt" of sin, and makes a "new creation."[1]

Although most Evangelicals and United Brethren were not learning tolerance from their contacts with non-Christian peoples, on a few others the liberal doctrines of tentativeness and tolerance had left their mark. J. S. Mills, the liberal United Brethren leader, asserted that all the great religions contain truth,[2] and F. P. Rosselot concluded his strong plea for tolerance with this verse:

> We grasp the truth wherever found,
> On heathen or on Christian ground,
> Among your friends, among your foes;
> The plant's divine where'er it grows.[3]

Professor A. W. Drury contended that Christianity is the only religion that proclaims a real salvation and that Christians should study other religions principally to enable them to convert the heathen to the Christian religion. However, he advised that "if Christian apologists are wise and fair, they will recognize the truth held by other religions," rejoicing in the "evidence of the religious constitution of man and in the continued witness given to many of its own most important truths."[4]

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[1] W. E. Snyder, "Christ of the Christmastide," RT, December 22, 1928, p. 4.

[2] J. S. Mills, "Watson's Institutes," QR, I (January, 1890), 38-39.

[3] F. P. Rosselot, "Orthodoxy," QR, VI (July, 1895), 218.

[4] A. W. Drury, "Comparative Religion," QR, XIV (July-August, 1903), 196. Among United Evangelicals the most striking example of giving non-Christian religions some credit for validity occurred in J. F. Dunlap's presidential inaugural at Albright College. After discussing the

Immanentism

The recognition of at least a partial validity of non-Christian religions gained the support of many Protestants through the growing acceptance of a doctrine of divine immanence. God is universally present throughout the world--not limited to the supernatural realm. Only a few Evangelicals and United Brethren accepted and stressed this understanding of God.

For Dean Kirn of North-Western College, however, divine immanence was a cardinal doctrine. In the official denominational periodical he wrote: "The natural is but the phenomenal revealing the supernatural."[1] His readers surely must not have understood the implications of his doctrine. He entitled a later article: "Finding God--In Self."[2] Kirn put his convictions into systematic form in a book which the denominational publishing house printed in 1900. In his treatise Kirn asserted that because God is immanent in his creation, it is the very "nature of growth to become like Him."[3] That Kirn was deeply influenced by his readings in metaphysical idealism is evident from this unequivocal description of the divine and its relations with man: "The Infinite is not divided into individuals and afterwards united again into the universal. The Individual is only a modification of the universal."[4] Kirn's neighbor in Naperville, S. J. Gamertsfelder,

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developmental character of theology, Dunlap said that it is a "royal truth . . . that the prime elements of the highest gospel of to-day have always been, rudimentally at least, in the world, and in some respects in all nations" (TE, February 2, 1910, p. 68).

[1] G. J. Kirn, "The Relation of the Natural and the Supernatural," EM, March 25, 1903, p. 177.

[2] G. J. Kirn, "Finding God--In Self," EM, September 15, 1923, pp. 6-7.

[3] Kirn, Religion a Rational Demand, p. 182.

[4] Ibid., pp. 47-48.

shared his views regarding divine immanence, but not to the same degree. In his treatment of the religious consciousness in his Systematic Theology, however, Gamertsfelder did emphasize the intimacy of the natural relationship between man and God.[1]

Among United Brethren the most prominent leader in whose writings the theme appears is Bishop J. S. Mills. Before seminary students in Dayton he declared: "He not only transcends all nature and works upon it from without, but he is in all nature as its moral and spiritual center, its guiding force, the 'power that makes for righteousness.'"[2] In an article on "The Essence of Christianity" Mills denies that the essence is to be found in ceremonies, creeds, systems of theology, ethics, the church, nor the Bible. Instead he finds it in "the Spirit of God in man's soul, attesting his divine sonship." He goes on to explain the relation of man to the divine:

> It may be asked, How can God dwell in man without destroying man's personality? We answer, There is an essential unity between the nature of God and man. If it were not so, it were inconceivable that God could identify himself in thought, feeling, volition, and life with the man Jesus. But this unity is proved by (1) the fatherhood of God. His children are born from above, begotten of God. Like only is begotten by like. . . . (2) We are able to know, to love, and to commune with God, which we could not do if we did not share his nature. . . . "The human soul is by its nature receptive of Deity."[3]

Bishop William Bell's The Social Message of Our Lord, with its use of the idea of social evolution and its proclamation of the social gospel, rests on a doctrine of divine immanence, although Bell nowhere in the book spells this out. It emerges more clearly in the Introduction, which was written by a Hugh W. Gilchrist. He explained the nature of the book in these words: "The basic proposition of the book is that God, indwelling

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[1]Gamertsfelder, Systematic Theology, p. 67. [2]Funk, p. 220.

[3]J. S. Mills, "The Essence of Christianity," QR, VI (January, 1895), 43. In the article Mills was quoting Goodwin, Christ and Humanity, p. 314.

man, functions with the human nature; he operated in the conduct and the relations of the one he indwells, and thus through the man God permeates society with spiritual wisdom and vitality, and with increase of his righteousness."[1]

One of the clearest statements of belief in divine immanence is that of Dr. W. O. Krohn, a United Brethren who taught Mental and Moral Philosophy at Western Reserve University after turning down an offer to join the faculty of Union Biblical Seminary. Following a critique of Butler's Analogy and all similar attempts to prove the existence of God, he declares his belief in the immanence of God:

> We may safely say that the relation in which God now stands to the world is precisely the same as that in which he has always stood and forever will stand to the world. God is the immanent ground of the universe. He is not extra-mundane. He is intra-mundane. The universe is the continual and eternal expression of the divine will.[2]

Professor W. G. Clippinger of Bonebrake Theological Seminary warned against carrying this doctrine of divine immanence too far. He saw that there was real danger on the part of some of his associates of losing sight of divine transcendence. With considerable insight he explained the nature of the problem:

> The entire question rests, from the scientific viewpoint, upon an ever and everywhere present and knowable God. But, to me, an unknowable, unsearchable God means infinitely more than one who can be wholly understood. When God is once known to the finite mind, he ceases to be God, and hence is brought to the plane of the finite. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out.[3]

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[1]William Melvin Bell, The Social Message of Our Lord (Dayton, Ohio: The Otterbein Press, 1909), pp. [i, ii].

[2]Krohn, QR, II, 106-107. Supra, p. 228n.

[3]W. G. Clippinger, "The Illusions of 'the Divine Immanence,'" RT, July 17, 1907, pp. 8-9.

The Glorification of Man

A corollary of divine immanence was the raising of man to an idealized plane. Man was placed at the center of things, high hopes for his destiny in this world were expressed, and revulsion at doctrines of human depravity set in. The Rev. J. B. Kanaga, presiding elder of the Evangelicals' Ohio Conference for ten years,[1] understood the tie between divine immanence and and a corresponding glorification of man. Pointing to past exaggerations of the depravity of man, he asserted that the dignity of human nature is one of the "implications of the doctrine of the incarnation." Which was more basic for Kanaga is not clear, for he also asserted the opposite--that the basis for the doctrine of the incarnation is found in "the moral nature of man."[2]

Kanaga was the fraternal representative to the United Brethren General Conference in 1905, and his address was an expansion of the ideas he had earlier expressed in the Messenger. In an unusually glowing tribute to the glory of man, he said:

> God never uttered a word in disparagement of the dignity of human nature. He put eternal honor upon it in the incarnation of our Lord. It has been well said that the glory of God is the living man, and the life of man is the vision of God. Man himself is a revelation, the revelation of nature come to consciousness and asking to know the origin of things, and above all the origin of the human spirit, between which and material nature there is a wider gulf than between the human spirit and the Father of spirits. We are nearer related to Deity than to dust.[3]

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[1] Leedy, pp. 770-71.

[2] J. B. Kanaga, "The Doctrine of the Incarnation," EM, December 21, 1904, p. 802.

[3] EM, May 24, 1905, p. 328. Such addresses are significant, for they indicate not only the ideas and convictions prevalent in one denomination, but also those which the speaker feels will have an appeal to the audience. When the Rev. W. C. Hallwachs died in 1927, his editorial associate, Ammon E. Hangen, spoke this tribute to him at the funeral service: "He

G. J. Kirn clearly placed man at the center. For him faith in God was based upon man's hopes and ideals: "The being at the heart of the universe is reliable and will not disappoint legitimate human expectations if the conditions upon which they rest are properly met."[1] This is a doctrine of assurance, and it bears striking resemblance to the doctrine of assurance which the denominational founders had held. The basic confidence in the reliability of man's religious experience is there, but the appeal to Scripture is lacking. Kirn's doctrine was far more anthropocentric than a Biblical doctrine of assurance could be:

> Faith accepts the Christian doctrine that the ideals of human nature are not a lie, but that they represent fundamental realities, and that these ideals form the legitimate goal of his aspiration. Faith says that this goal ought to be reached, in fact, that these ideals must be realized. As an answer to the question, "Is it possible?" comes the assurance: It cannot be that God will disappoint legitimate personal expectations, or blast the blossoming ideals of personality if only the conditions upon which their realization rests are properly met.[2]

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believed in man--for what he was and might be. Made in God's image he could be a son of God. And with such a high estate, made after such a likeness, personality would not be destroyed" (EM, February 26, 1927, p. 13).

Other signs of the Evangelicals' increasing confidence in man appear in various aspects of their ministerial training. In 1916 departments of psychology of religion and philosophy of religion were organized at Evangelical Theological Seminary at Naperville (EM, June 14, 1916, p. 11). In a book which young ministerial candidates were required to read, Bishop Spreng asserted that "all interest in Creation and in Redemption centers in Man," that man is "the chief end of all God's thought and purpose, . . . the reason for all that God does in providence and grace, . . . the final expression of God's wisdom, goodness and power" (What Evangelicals Believe, p. 43).

[1] G. J. Kirn, "Practical Aspects of Religion. The Value of Faith," EM, August 30, 1905, p. 545.

[2] Ibid. In his statement Kirn nearly echoed the sentiment of an article which appeared in the Quarterly Review about ten years before. The Rev. L. F. John sounded almost Feuerbachian in his assertion that "man's conception of God is simply a combination of the principles and powers which he regards highest in himself, freed more or less from limitations" ("The Basis of a True Theology," QR, VI [October, 1895], 346). In assessing revelation and God, said John, "man must have some standard, and this

Personality

Another strand in the fabric of evangelical liberalism at the turn of the century was the category of personality. Liberal theologians in the centers of graduate training had felt the influence of Lotze, and some became the eager promulgators of a personalistic approach to all theological questions. This influence never became very strong among United Brethren, perhaps because of the tendency of United Brethren to go for graduate work in religion to Yale and Chicago, neither of which was a center of personalism. Bishop Mills was acquainted with personalism, but he seemed to be conversant with all major intellectual trends whether or not he became their advocate.[1] In 1908 a Telescope review of Bowne's Personalism warned against its idealism and the consequent "rejection of common-sense impressions."[2]

Within the Evangelical Association the influence of personalism was much greater. Related as it was to the concept of divine immanence, personalism influenced the theology of its devotees both in its doctrines of God and of man. It supported and nourished the growing fascination with the infinite possibilities inherent within man, fastening attention upon man's personality, and giving special emphasis to his mental powers. On the divine side, it led to a conceiving of God almost totally in terms of personal Spirit. Here again Gamertsfelder of Evangelical Theological Seminary and Dean Kirn of North-Western College were the bearers of these new ideas that seemed so basically to agree with the traditional emphases of

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he finds in his own reasoning soul" (Ibid.).

At Union Biblical Seminary in 1897 the opening address was delivered by the Rev. S. D. Faust, Professor of Church History since 1893. He said: "The problem of the human race is the evolution of the God-ideal man. To its solution the church is to give direction" (RT, September 8, 1897, p. 1133).

[1]Funk, pp. 48-49. [2]RT, August 12, 1908, p. 26.

the denomination upon the authority of the individual's own religious experience and a personal relationship with a loving and forgiving God.

Dean Kirn's personalism appears clearly in his great stress on the value of human personality. One of his attacks on atheism is based on the observation that in all its forms it is "destructive of the value of personality."[1] Likewise, the trouble with materialism is that it submerges the value of personality.[2] The primary significance of Jesus is that "he shifted the emphasis from law to personality."[3] Kirn expressed his personalism explicitly in his Religion a Rational Demand, where he asserts that reason "feels impelled to think of this being in that category of personality" since it is the highest category of thought.[4]

Consistent with an immanental understanding of God, Kirn and others stressed the inter-relationship between divine and human personality. Although S. P. Spreng was the first to explain this relationship so

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[1]G. J. Kirn, "Theoretical and Practical Atheism," EM, November 6, 1901, pp. 705-706. Cf. his "Biblical Ideals--The Value of Personality," EM, May 1, 1901, pp. 273-274.

[2]G. J. Kirn, "The Practical Aspects of Philosophy as Taught in Colleges and Universities," EM, August 16, 1905, p. 513.

[3]G. J. Kirn, "The Fourth Crisis in the Religion of Israel--Jesus," EM, July 4, 1921, pp. 5-6. Kirn could hardly have been disappointed with Henry Churchill King's commencement address when he came to North-Western College in 1909 to speak on the subject, "Reverence for Personality" (EM, June 30, 1909, p. 2).

[4]Kirn, Religion a Rational Demand, pp. 39, 103. See G. J. Kirn, "Practical Aspects of Religion," EM, July 19, 1905, p. 449. Cf. H. H. Smith's article, "A Christian Definition of God," in which he states his approval of the definition of God found in Dr. William Newton Clarke's Outline of Christian Theology: "God is the personal Spirit, perfectly good, who in holy love creates, sustains, and orders all" (EM, December 7, 1929, p. 6). Bishop John Stamm, who had spent several years in Naperville as an instructor on the seminary faculty, also shows the influence of personalism in his statement that "the greatest reality in the universe is personality." According to Stamm, "the glory of the human personality lies in his capacity to become God-like in character and life" (Evangelism and Christian Experience, p. 35).

clearly,[1] Kirn said it best in an article which appeared two years later:

> The doctrine of immortality, though lying capsulate in all, or nearly all, the religions of antiquity, never received its full expression until Christ brought it to light. He unbolted the doors and led the learner into the temple of wisdom. He showed him the halo of glory that surrounds the person. Personality is the great thing the phenomenal world is given it for its exercise and its realization. The perfection of the individual in the likeness of the perfect Father is the ideal and goal of the kingdom of Christ. Christ saw clearly that the religion of a stereotyped system needed a restatement in terms of personal relationship, and could find no more inspiring figure than that of a father, tender and compassionate, yearning for the return of a wandering and suffering child, that He might save it from an absolute and eternal loss. His concern grows the deeper, because the value of the person is absolute.
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> It is in this absolute value of personality, and not in the value of an external system, that religion finds its perennial value. Here lies its promise of furnishing the soul an enduring stimulus.
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> This, then, is the religion that satisfies. The personal soul finds the personal God, in whom all mysteries are comprehended, and in whose fulness the ever inquiring intellect finds material for its employment, in whose infinite compassion the penitent sinner finds a ready forgiveness, and from whose infinite power comes a ready reinforcement to the personal will as it struggles against the evil for the accomplishment of the good.[2]

Gamertsfelder was the leader in reinterpreting the doctrine of God. The divine being was now to be regarded as essentially personal--the Absolute Personality.[3] A "sound philosophy," he wrote, demands a belief in a

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[1] S. P. Spreng, "The Essence of Christianity," EM, April 15, 1903, p. 232.

[2] G. J. Kirn, "Practical Aspects of Religion," EM, August 9, 1905, p. 498. Kirn's thoughts were echoed by others. It was either S. P. Spreng or his cousin and editorial associate, E. M. Spreng, who called personality "the image of God" in man ("The Value of Personality," EM, September 19, 1906, p. 4). The bishops in their episcopal message to the General Conference of 1919 refer to personality as "the final word in philosophy" and "the first and final word in Revelation;" the personality of man they called "the greatest fact in the world" and the personality of God "the sublimest fact in the universe" (EM, October 8, 1919, p. 2). Bishop Spreng, who probably helped to formulate the address, repeated this sentiment in his book on the Evangelicals' course of study for ministers (Spreng, What Evangelicals Believe, p. 44).

[3] S. J. Gamertsfelder, "The Foundation of Religious Belief," EM, October 27, 1897, p. 677.

personal God, for no other view makes sense of the world we live in. Gamertsfelder betrays the personalist's intellectualistic bias in his contention that "man's conception of a Supreme Being or of higher powers determines his religion."[1] He further developed his conceptions of the personality of God in his Systematic Theology,[2] which was read by many ministerial students at Evangelical Theological Seminary over the years.

Christocentrism

Evangelical liberalism's stress on the centrality of Christ, particularly upon his human life, was an emphasis which could hardly fail to be congenial to Evangelicals and United Brethren. The appeal to the authority and attractiveness of Christ was at the heart of the traditional message and invitational appeal of the revival and the campmeeting. The extent to which the new liberal Christocentrism penetrated Evangelicals and United Brethren is worth examining, for it had an effect upon their conception of the method and task of theology.

J. W. Etter gave the theme a major treatment in his inaugural address at the seminary in Dayton in the fall of 1891. With his affirmation that no damage could be suffered by Christianity so long as "the germ and root" of Christian theology be kept inviolate, he offered reassurance to United Brethren who feared the theological changes which the next century might bring. "This vital nucleus," he said, "is the Person and Work of Christ."[3] For Etter this had several important implications. One had to do with the

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[1]S. J. Gamertsfelder, "An Adequate Conception of God," EM, February 15, 1905, p. 97.

[2]See Gamertsfelder, Systematic Theology, Part II, pp. 164-66.

[3]J. W. Etter, "The Christocentric Idea in Theology," QR, III (January, 1892), 2.

whole matter of authority and the place of the Bible in theological inquiry. His words must have had a calming effect upon those who had felt the sting of higher criticism and had been unable to regain their assurance about the place of the Bible. He had this counsel to offer:

> We hear much now about the "inerrancy and infallibility of the Bible." . . . In whatever way this question may finally be settled, makes no difference. Christian theology will remain the same, for here we are concerned only with the teachings of Christ. There exists a wide gulf between the human and the divine in revelation, or between the inspired and the Inspirer. Every inspired writer has proved to be errant and fallible in act, if not in word, but Christ was absolutely inerrant and infallible both in precept and in example. . . . Take Christ out of our theology and you have an empty sepulcher, a ghostly void--worse, a Godless chaos. . . . I need make no apology for making the Christ idea my hobby in theology. We can afford to surrender every other pet and traditional theory but this one. To surrender all else, is to surrender nothing. To surrender this, is to surrender everything.[1]

The other significant implication was that this emphasis upon Christ could provide a firm basis for the unity which Etter envisioned for Christendom:

> If I understand the signs of the times I see a rapid tendency and progress toward Christian unity, which must result in the minimizing and abandoning of the controversials and non-essentials, and in the emphasizing and magnifying of the fundamentals. As we approach the dawning of the Millennium we will reconstruct our theology, reexamine our Bible more for the purpose of learning what it says about Christ than for material to spin out our speculative, visionary theories concerning the antiquity of man, the decrees of God, the origin of angels, and the future state of the departed.[2]

Bishop J. W. Hott sounded the same ecumenical note in his assertion that denominationalism rests on non-essential differences; it is not perpetuated because of serious differences of theology, but it merely reflects varying patterns of worship and church government. Hott rejoiced that "Christ and religion are exalted more than dogma," and that Christianity

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[1] Ibid., pp. 13-14. [2] Ibid., pp. 14-15.

was becoming "more a religion and less a theology."[1]

L. F. John's favorable review of Fairbairn's The Place of Christ in Modern Theology is a clear indication of the reviewer's theological allegiance. What attracted him about the book he spelled out clearly:

> He examines the teachings of Christ and finds that the determinative idea with him and the apostles is the Sonship of Christ and the Fatherhood of God as revealed in him. This constitutive idea should be the starting-point of Christian theology. Christ's conception of himself thus becomes the interpretation of God and of the Godhead. God, as interpreted by Christ, is thus the determinative principle of theology. This principle is two fold, containing a formal and a material element. The formal is the "consciousness of Christ." The material is the "Fatherhood of God." This material principle unfolded in the Christ consciousness gives a theology having Christ as its center.[2]

The Christocentric trend in theology also left an impress on Evangelicals. J. B. Kanaga recognized and called attention to this theological trend, praising it as "one of the healthful signs of the times that the thought of Christian thinkers of to-day centres around the Christ."[3]

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[1]J. W. Hott, "Basis of Denominationalism," QR, X (July, 1899), 198.

[2]L. F. John, Review of The Place of Christ in Modern Theology, by Andrew Fairbairn, QR, VII (April, 1896), 161. In a surprisingly objective analysis of theological liberalism, the Rev. I. H. Albright enumerates its commendable features and those which are less pleasant. He finds three characteristics to praise, among which is the effort to make theology more Christocentric ("The Old Theology and the New," QR, XIV [January-February, 1903], 24-25). In 1927 the Rev. Fay Bowman was asserting that "the whole system of Christian teaching, doctrine, ethics, including social, political, and international ethics, rests" on one's doctrine of the person of Christ. In fact, if a man is thoroughly established "in his conception of the nature of Christ, there will be little trouble in his Christian life" ("Christ--Example, Authority, Savior," RT, January 29, 1927, p. 7).

The typically liberal preference for the religion of Jesus over the religion about Jesus appears in an article in 1926 by the new editor of the Telescope, W. E. Snyder. In it he interprets believing in Christ as believing what Christ believed, taught, and exemplified--that right is superior to wrong, the importance of love, going the second mile, and turning the other cheek ("Believing in Christ," RT, November 27, 1926, pp. 3-4).

Also see B. F. Daugherty, "The Ever-living Christ," RT, April 19, 1919, p. 6.

[3]J. B. Kanaga, "Present Day Christology," EM, January 15, 1896, p. 40.

He was not uncritical in his appreciation, for he was decidedly opposed to the kenosis theory of Christ's person which Charles Gore had espoused in 1889 in Lux Mundi, the English symposium.[1]

Gamertsfelder stressed the human life of Jesus, as evangelical liberalism did. For him it was "the historical and psychological or spiritual life of Jesus" that was "the way, the truth and the life."[2] The cardinal facts of Christianity are to be found in the simple life of the historical Jesus which one can find in sacred literature. This centrality of Christ answered two problems for Gamertsfelder. It became the principle by which he could assert his belief in progressive revelation, yet find a terminal point for this revelation and relieve him of further embarrassment among his conservative friends.[3] A second result was that it provided the point of stability in the midst of his relativizing of creeds, theological statements, and even the Bible. He stated forthrightly that "our Christian faith is not rooted in the creeds of Christendom but in Jesus Christ, the Son of God." This placing of Christ at the center of theology then provided the validation of the New Testament, for it is there that we learn of him in "a perfect mirror which reflects unto us our infallible Christ with absolute authority."[4]

Editor William H. Bucks of the Messenger agreed with Gamertsfelder, for he declared that scripture is to be judged by the declarations of Jesus

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[1]J. B. Kanaga, "The Doctrine of the Kenosis of Christ," EM, January 19, 1898, p. 34.

[2]S. J. Gamertsfelder, "Cardinal Facts of Christianity," EM, January 25, 1905, p. 50. Cf. G. J. Kirn's "The Religion of Jesus," EM, September 20, 1911, pp. 6-7, in which he calls Jesus a "religious genius."

[3]See Gamertsfelder's "A Completed Revelation," EM, June 14, 1905, pp. 369-70.

[4]Gamertsfelder, Systematic Theology, p. 23.

as recorded in the four gospels.[1] Some years later he developed this idea, affirming that "in no production even of the wisest minds can be found the final authority."[2] This must be lodged in a Divine Personality. Christ is the ultimate authority, not the Bible.

Bucks' editorial successor agreed with him and perpetuated the theme himself. The authority of Christ, said Edwin Frye, provided the stable element when all things, even theological doctrines, were in flux.[3] Frye had a congenial editorial associate in Ammon E. Hangen, who, when he became editor of The Evangelical in 1920, announced as his editorial policy and goal: "The Interpretation and Verification of the Christianity of Jesus Christ."[4] What he meant by that he clarified by using an article taken from the Pacific Christian Advocate which sharply contrasts doctrine and Christ. According to this article, men insist too much upon certain forms of doctrine. But this is not how Christ deals with us, for he presents us with himself, not with a statement of faith. Christians must not allow doctrine to obscure or usurp Christ's place.[5]

How the Christocentric emphasis could function in the religious experience of an individual is illustrated well by the testimony of C. A. Mock. He recalled that at a particularly difficult time of his life (probably while he was studying at Yale) when he was confronting doctrines which were far different from those he had learned as a youth, he found stability

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[1]William H. Bucks, "The Supreme Test of Christian Doctrine," EM, April 9, 1919, pp. 3-4.

[2]William H. Bucks, "The Final Authority," EM, February 19, 1927, pp. 7-8.

[3]Edwin Frye, "An Emphasis Now Needed," EM, July 17, 1926, p. 3.

[4]TE, November 3, 1920, p. 6.

[5]A. E. Hangen, "Doctrine and Experience," TE, May 23, 1922, p. 13.

through reading a book which pointed to the eternal Christ who is ever at work among men to save. Confronted by this "living, saving contemporary Christ all doubts and misgivings disappeared and faith found a secure footing." Since that time doubts had not been a problem; "the fact of Jesus Christ as the supreme fact of our day" had held him firm in his faith.[1] He elaborated some of the implications of this faith:

> Over against the fact of a living and saving Christ I place all theories and doctrines which would discredit his personality or deny his deity, minimize the meaning of his death as a vicarious offering for sin or cast doubt upon the reality of his resurrection and his exalted life.
>
> . . . A mind that is disquieted by opposing religious or theological theories needs only to see Christ at work. . . .
>
> I have made no attempt here to deal with the content of a true orthodoxy. I have merely tried to point out the things which accredit a creed or system of doctrine and to show that the credentials of a true orthodoxy must be found in the realm of spiritual dynamics through the power it appropriates and wields in the work of destroying sin and establishing the kingdom of God in the world. This orthodoxy, whatever be its content as now held, cannot be fixed or static. It must be a living, growing orthodoxy, just as "Jesus Christ grows before our thought unceasingly because we see him steadily overcoming recurrent forces of evil which are all but too much for him, and are altogether too much for us."[2]

Openness to Science

One aspect of evangelical liberalism's reorientation in theology had to do with its response to the impact of Darwinism. The liberal wanted to express his faith in terms that would be attractive and acceptable to modern man. In some way, therefore, he had to take into account the new scientific ideas. Those close to the radical fringe would call for outright adoption of scientific method; liberals following the lead of Ritschl would attempt to outflank it; and conservatives would seek patterns of defense that would be useful in their denunciation of it. But none could ignore

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[1] C. A. Mock, "The Credentials of a True Orthodoxy," EM, April 16, 1927, pp. 9-10.

[2] Ibid.

Darwinism, for the theory of evolution tended to modify the traditional doctrines of creation and the fall of man, and it gave rise to new ideas about the origin and nature of sin.[1] Most Evangelicals and United Brethren were conservatives, but a few voices called for a more liberal approach.

Those who felt some pressure to listen to science made numerous attempts at harmonization. One approach was to appeal to the statements of pious scientists and philosophers to show that science and religion were not in conflict. Some of these "authorities" were Agassiz, McCosh, Sir William Dawson, Robert A. Millikan, and Emil DuBois Reymond. Anton Huelster told of the intellectual "conversion" of Reymond, who had been "Rector Magnificus" of Berlin University when Huelster studied there in 1870. He declared that "as a rule, only the second and third-rate naturalists have been infidels," but that those men who were the really great minds inevitably found "traces everywhere of the eternal I Am, of whose infinite power and wisdom the universe is the visible manifestation."[2]

Another approach was to seek ways to apply the new scientific knowledge to the religious realm.[3] Henry Drummond rapidly became a favorite of many in both denominations, for his easy harmonization had a widespread appeal:

> Nature and religion are but two divisions of the kingdom, and nothing happens by chance in the religious world any more than in the natural world. Everything must have a cause. . . . We must seek for causes in

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[1] See Cauthen, pp. 24-25.

[2] Anton Huelster, "Naturalists and Their Religion," TE, October 20, 1897, p. 330. Also see the editorial note in RT, January 26, 1898, p. 97; "Science and Religion," RT, October 31, 1925, pp. 4-5.

[3] Cf. G. J. Kirn's "The Inspiration of the Old Testament," in which he approves of higher criticism as an attempt to apply the principle of evolution to the Bible (EM, May 28, 1902, p. 337).

religious life as we do in nature. Let us look at the promises in the Bible. They are all conditional--all related as effect to cause.[1]

When Drummond died in 1897, The Evangelical carried a friendly and commendatory editorial note of some length, mentioning his association with Moody.[2] United Brethren added Drummond's book, Natural Law in the Spiritual World, to their list of recommended books for ministerial students in 1893.[3] Therefore, Editor Kephart was quick to check the report later in the year that Drummond had adopted Darwinism. To his relief he learned that it was not so; Drummond was indeed a theistic evolutionist, not an atheistic one.[4]

Few United Evangelicals cared to try to harmonize science and religion, particularly as the fundamentalist controversy grew more intense. Apparently it was an issue at Albright College, for the announcement that James P. Stober (professor of biology and geology and summa cum laude graduate from Bucknell in 1898) had received his Ph.D. was accompanied by his position on the harmony of science and religion.[5]

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[1]"A Bible Talk," TE, September 25, 1889, p. 305. See Drummond's address on "Cause and Effect in Religion" in TE, December 18, 1895, p. 401. Cf. H. B. Hartzler's editorial on "The Bible Teaches Evolution," TE, December 2, 1896, p. 385.

[2]TE, March 17, 1897, p. 81. The Messenger also had praise for Drummond (EM, April 22, 1914, p. 4), but only after recovering from the shock incurred when a false report was received that Drummond had capitulated to Darwinism (J. B. Kanaga, "Drummond and Darwinism," EM, October 31, 1893, p. 289); cf. editorial deploring Drummond's "skepticism" (EM, January 9, 1894, p. 18).

[3]GCJUB, 1893, p. 402.

[4]I. L. Kephart, "Professor Drummond and Darwinism," RT, October 25, 1893, p. 673. Lewis Bookwalter, president of Otterbein University, spoke approvingly of Drummond's theistic evolution in his baccalaureate sermon in 1905 (RT, June 21, 1905, p. 772).

[5]TE, September 23, 1914, p. 9. Charles Mock makes ample use of The Christian Ministry, by Lyman Abbott, the Christian evolutionist, in an article in The Evangelical in 1912 (TE, April 10, 1912, p. 226).

Among Evangelicals several tried their hands at harmonization. G. J. Kirn advised Christians that they need not be afraid of science, for evolution may simply be the method that God uses.[1] No wonder he thought fear was unwarranted, for he chose carefully that portion of "science" which was palatable to him. Few scientists would have agreed with him that "science tells us that the soul is the greatest force, in connection with the chemical forces, in the construction of the body."[2] The Rev. F. W. Umbreit held that even though Darwinian evolution should come to be regarded as a law of nature, it would not obviate the necessity of a Designer or of explaining the law of survival itself.[3] That some phenomena might not have readily available explanations was not a live possibility for Umbreit.

Numerous harmonizers appeared among United Brethren. The Quarterly Review became the arena where some of them could offer their theories for examination. Professor A. M. Beal, who taught natural science at Western College, took the position that the Bible was compatible with the nebular hypothesis and the facts of geology.[4] Bishop E. B. Kephart did a word-study of the Hebrew in Genesis 1:1 to show that it was in accord with "the scientific nebular hypothesis."[5] H. H. Fout's introductory editorial for

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[1]G. J. Kirn, "Evolution and Religion," EM, February 3, 1904, p. 65.

[2]G. J. Kirn, "What Religious Tenets Find Their Support in Nature?" EM, January 10, 1893, p. 17.

[3]F. W. Umbreit, "Evolution and Theism," EM, July 1, 1903, pp. 401-402. S. P. Spreng asserted that harmony was possible since, after all, "the Bible was the first to proclaim evolution as a method of creative co-operation, but with God behind it" (The Most Popular Book in the World [Cleveland, Ohio: C. Hauser, Publishing Agent for the Evangelical Association, 1911], p. 31).

[4]A. M. Beal, "Science and the Bible," QR, I (April, 1890), 160-68.

[5]E. B. Kephart, "The Hebrew Word 'Eth,'" QR, VI (April, 1895), 168-169. A review of the Rev. William McLane's Evolution in Religion, described as a book "written for the purpose of showing that it is entirely

the Quarterly Review in 1899 exudes confidence that "'the foundation of God standeth sure,' and that science and religion exhibit a more beautiful harmony as the world advances."[1]

Editor I. L. Kephart also made the columns of the Telescope a forum for affirmations of harmony between science and religion. Kephart himself wrote on the subject, asserting that true science is the "handmaid of Christianity,"[2] and he solicited articles on the subject from others.[3] One of these performs the harmonizing operation by the familiar approach of calling the days of creation periods rather than literal days, correlating them with geological periods.[4] Nearly thirty years later Editor Snyder flippantly pronounced that "of course, there is no conflict between religion and science. The only conflict is between the opinions of individuals representing religion and those representing science."[5] Snyder invited the president of the Philadelphia Natural History Society to write several articles for the Telescope, in one of which he argued that there was nothing incompatible

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possible to admit all the facts claimed by the evolutionists without giving up the thought of a divine Creator," sounds like a defensive, rearguard action (QR, IV [October, 1893], 373).

[1]H. H. Fout, "Introductory Words," QR, X (January, 1899), 89.

[2]RT, April 26, 1893, p. 257. See an editorial note on evolution in RT, March 4, 1891, p. 129; "Science and the Bible at the Close of the Century," RT, December 26, 1900, p. 652.

[3]See B. F. Fritz, "Science and the Bible," RT, July 6, 1898, pp. 838-839.

[4]Rev. T. H. Harman, "The Bible Not Opposed to Science," RT, May 10, 1899, p. 585. The Rev. John W. Owen, a contributor to the Telescope under Kephart's successor, based his efforts at harmonization on a demonstration of the fallibility of science ("Science and Religion," RT, July 10, 1912, pp. 8-9; ibid., July 24, 1912, pp. 9-10).

[5]RT, December 4, 1926, p. 5.

with the doctrine of the Virgin Birth and the teachings of biology.[1] What a comfort this must have been to the orthodox!

A few, however, were looking for more than comfort. Genuine openness to the truth was present here and there in all three denominational groups. The most vocal United Brethren was J. W. Etter, who communicated his ideas chiefly through the Quarterly Review. Friendly to the theistic evolution of Asa Gray, McCosh, and Henry Drummond, Etter asserted that "Darwinian evolution is not necessarily godless, irreligious, or atheistical" and that "no intelligent student will now deny many of the indisputable facts of evolution that have been brought to light since the days of Darwin."[2]

Two men who were not leaders among United Evangelicals spoke up during the heat of the excitement which flared after Fosdick's sermon in the summer of 1922. One of them, the Rev. G. M. Ludwig, was grateful for science's "persistent demand for accuracy and honesty."[3] Either one must prove his theory with actual facts, wrote Ludwig, or else confess his ignorance. Fanatical conservatism has done Christianity considerable harm, for it has resulted in a bad reputation with men of science. Christianity must stand ready to confess its limitations. For instance, it must be willing to admit that

> the Bible is not intended as a Book of Science. The Bible is a book of ethics and religion. This does not imply that the Bible is scientifically inaccurate, but that its references to science are only incidental

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[1]W. Henry Sheak, "The Immaculate Conception from the Standpoint of the Biologist," RT, August 4, 1928, pp. 14-15.

[2]J. W. Etter, Review of Darwin and After Darwin, by G. J. Romanes, QR, IV (January, 1893), 90. Editor I. L. Kephart of the Telescope also seems to have been genuinely open to the new scientific knowledge ("The 'Why?' of Evolution," RT, March 19, 1902, pp. 356-57).

[3]G. M. Ludwig, "An Honest but Important Confession," TE, September 12, 1922, pp. 8-9.

> and their value only secondary. If this fact were more widely recognized much of the so-called conflict between science and the Bible would disappear.[1]

Another voice was that of the Rev. Eldon Ramige, who confessed that he wanted to be open to evolution in case it were correct: "If it should prove out that the Bible is a book whose abiding worth is not in its scientific value but rather in the infinitely greater worth--its religious value--our conviction can ever remain just as firm that it is the Inspired word of God."[2]

Openness to evolution appears in the Evangelical Association, too. S. J. Gamertsfelder was cautiously liberal in his opinion that "the unbiased theologian will make room for the fully verified conclusions of science in his body of divinity."[3]

Far more exciting was an article by the Rev. J. A. Heck, recent graduate of Drew Theological Seminary, who called himself a "sympathetic observer" of the theory of evolution.[4] He expressed his decided displeasure at the destructive criticisms of the "evolutionary hypothesis" which had come from the extreme conservative wing of Christianity. Heck did not want to be identified as a modernist, nor was he defending a naturalistic interpretation of the universe, but he was frank to confess that "if zeal for truth and a championing of open-minded thinking is synonymous with modernism or heterodoxy, then I must confess to being a subscriber to

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Eldon Ramige, "What Shall We As United Evangelicals Think of 'Evolution?'" TE, October 17, 1922, pp. 10-12.

[3] Gamertsfelder, Systematic Theology, p. 19.

[4] J. A. Heck, "Evolution," EM, September 29, 1923, pp. 6-7. The copy of the Messenger containing Heck's article which was in the reading room of the seminary library at Naperville, Illinois, had this pencilled annotation: "Was the editor asleep when this article passed" (Ibid.)?

both." This was his nine-point statement:

> 1. History reveals the folly of standing out against the findings of honest investigation and scientific research. . . .
> 2. Truth possesses inherent power to vindicate itself. . . .
> 3. We must distinguish between evolution as a scientific fact and the varied explanations of its method. . . .
> 4. It is well to remember that a vast army of modern thinkers, in addition to the large group of scientists, accept evolution no longer as a mere hypothesis but as an established cosmic principle. . . .
> 5. On a question like evolution, which has to do purely with phenomenal processes, the judgment of a large group of trained scientists who are in possession of all the data and skilled in their interpretation ought to be authoritative. It ill behooves a theologian or any layman in science to contradict the testimony of a vast array of scientific evidence, in the interest of a pet and perhaps indefensible theory of his own.
> 6. Contrary to general opinion, scientists are not infidels or atheists. . . .
> 7. In our religious zeal--which in itself is very commendable--we must not hold stubbornly to indefensible positions or be led to maintain interpretations out of harmony with all the facts. How glibly people speak of the "inspiration" of the Bible, or its "authority" without having the least idea what reason demands that they connote. Instead of being used as intelligent meaningful concepts, they are employed--as it would appear--as meaningless "catch-phrases" to swing invectives against science and anything relating to modern thought.
> 8. Evolution, properly understood, is not essentially out of harmony with the Bible when it is properly interpreted. . . . Why agonize to maintain a "literalism" in some non-essential and non-religious details when in other points Christian thinking has abandoned it altogether!
> 9. Finally, loyalty to truth demands the spirit of tolerance. . . .[1]

Soon afterward appeared an article by the Rev. R. H. Mueller which was a point-by-point refutation of Heck's position.[2] Interestingly enough, Heck only retired from his position as Professor of Systematic Theology at United Theological Seminary in 1963, and Mueller is a bishop, currently serving as president of the National Council of Churches.

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[1] J. A. Heck, "Evolution," EM, September 29, 1923, pp. 6-7.

[2] R. H. Mueller, "Revolution," EM, October 27, 1923, pp. 6-8.

Conclusion

The central doctrines of liberalism challenged the traditional approach of Evangelicals and United Brethren to theology. For those who felt the force of the new knowledge of non-Christian religions and the themes of tentativeness and tolerance, theology could not remain simply the means of defending the faith. The understanding of theological language as propositional, objective, and external to persons was challenged by the fundamental doctrine underlying the whole liberal development since Schleiermacher--that theological language is the expression of the religious experience of human beings, not the eternally true statements of God bequeathed to man. This conviction underlay the themes of tentativeness and tolerance. For those who took these doctrines seriously, the old confidence about the absolute truth of one's position seemed neither appropriate nor possible.

The traditional biblicism was challenged by the glorification of man and the Christocentrism of liberalism. Every generation inevitably looks for interpretive principles with which to understand the Biblical message. The traditional approach was to call the whole Bible equally valuable, yet concentrate on those portions which offered support for such denominational emphases as instantaneous conversion. In the face of incipient and full-blown higher criticism, liberalism's emphasis on the centrality of Christ and the affinity of man with God his Creator provided comforting checkpoints which appeared relatively stable.

For a generation of Evangelicals and United Brethren who were better educated and more integrated members of society than their forebears, the willingness and ability of liberalism to come to terms with philosophy and science were attractive. The new personalism was a philosophy not only

compatible with Christian faith, but admirably suited to be an apologetic. Furthermore, the tendency of liberalism to confine religious experience to the feelings or to the moral life facilitated a rapprochement with science. Although few were willing to breathe deeply in this new atmosphere, the work and words of those who did slowly began to leave their mark on the approach to theology of Evangelicals and United Brethren.

XII. THE RESPONSE TO HIGHER CRITICISM

Introduction

Radically new methods of Biblical study began to appear in America in the 1880's--methods which bode ill both for the simple, uncritical pietist and for the Princeton scholastic with his doctrine of inerrancy. Called "higher criticism," this approach to the Bible had originated in Germany. Its name arose because it went beyond the work of the textual critic, which involved the recovery of as pure a text as possible, to investigate such questions as authorship, date, purpose, and sources. The name itself offended many American Protestants, for it seemed to imply that the ruthless higher critic was superior to the Bible lying prostrate and helpless before his destructive tools. Among conservatives its reputation was not enhanced by the eager reception which liberals gave it.

During the eighties many observers still regarded it as simply another species of German infidelity and rationalism. Not until the 1890's did higher criticism make a significant impact upon Evangelicals and United Brethren. Beyond Anton Huelster and S. J. Gamertsfelder of the Evangelicals and J. S. Mills and E. B. Kephart of the United Brethren, however, few understood the methods of higher criticism and wrestled with its implications for a proper interpretation of the Bible.

The response to higher criticism at the turn of the century was generally variegated and confused. Protestants were employing the new techniques for Biblical study in such differing ways and for such varying

purposes that to choose sides was difficult. Men like S. P. Spreng and J. B. Kanaga were resistant to higher criticism; yet they did not want to exclude all Biblical criticism. In the effort to distinguish between destructive and constructive criticism, they and others tried to determine the mood of a critic. He had to sound pious and reverent in order to deserve attention. Because of the interrupting static of the fundamentalist controversy, better understanding and widespread appreciation of the revolution in Biblical studies were delayed until the late twenties.

Like most American Protestants, Evangelicals and United Brethren had given little attention to a doctrine of scriptural authority. The Bible occupied a central position in their thought and work, but its use was almost entirely uncritical and simplistic. Over and over they affirmed the centrality of the Bible in their testimonies. In an 1894 editorial I. L. Kephart named "an unqualified, emphatic belief of the Bible as the word of God" as the most important belief of United Brethren. In words far clearer than the official Confession of Faith Kephart asserted that the denomination "stands unalterably committed to the belief that the Bible is the word of God, despite all that the higher criticism has said or may say."[1] United Evangelicals were listening increasingly to James Gray of Moody Bible Institute, and he was advising a hard, uncompromising line in the warfare against higher criticism and the New Theology. To accept any of the procedures of the higher critics, he said, was tantamount to giving up the Bible: "You think you can give up the written Word and still hold on to the Word Incarnate, but in the long run that will be found impossible."[2]

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[1] I. L. Kephart, "For What Does Our Denomination Stand?" RT, March 14, 1894, pp. 161-62.

[2] M. A. Martin, "Dr. James M. Gray and the Ministers on the Pacific Coast," TE, December 24, 1919, p. 11.

Sometimes the desire to keep theology Biblically based was expressed thoughtfully and with insight.[1] It could also take forms which were open to ridicule and charges of foolishness, as in the Rev. N. A. Barr's series of articles on "Boy Scouts of Patriarchal Times."[2] In any case, a simple trust in Scripture prevailed, as in Bishop Bowman of the Evangelicals, of whom it was said at his funeral: "To him the plain Word of God was the end of controversy."[3]

Evangelical liberalism, of course, provided the basis that made higher criticism viable. However, some churchmen saw that its emphasis on the "religious consciousness" presented a real threat to the authority of Scripture. J. P. E. Kumler was especially incisive in warning United Brethren against unduly exalting the subjective factor in revelation:

> Doubtless the Christian consciousness when confined to its proper sphere is of great value. The inward work of the Holy Spirit bears witness by and with the word in our hearts, and enables the believer to understand the things of God that cannot be correctly judged by the natural man. But while it reflects light to certify to the reliability of our religious beliefs, yet it itself is not that light. Its utterances are safe only so far as identical with the word of God; but they are not that word. Its appeal, therefore, should never be to itself, but always to the written word.[4]

If the official pronouncements of bishops and General Conferences are

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[1]See the editorial comment on an article in the Interior (TE, March 22, 1893, p. 92); William H. Bucks, "The Final Appeal of Theology," EM, March 11, 1914, p. 4. Also see the editorial note regarding theological controversy in RT, April 15, 1891, p. 225; J. W. Etter, Review of A Compendium of Christian Theology, by William Burt Pope, QR, I (October, 1890), 364-371.

[2]Barr wrote, for example: "Joseph was the model Boy Scout, indeed, in whom there was no guile" ("Boy Scouts of Patriarchal Times," TE, September 15, 1915, p. 12).

[3]S. P. Spreng, Funeral Sermon, EM, April 2, 1923, pp. 6-8.

[4]J. P. E. Kumler, "Tendencies Threatening Bible Authority," QR, IV (April, 1893), 113. See J. S. Mills, "Mysticism," QR, IX (January, 1898), 1-7; J. M. Phillippi, "Final Authority," RT, October 11, 1911, p. 5.

valid indicators of the mood of their respective denominations, the general attitude towards the newer methods of Bible study became increasingly defensive until about the middle twenties. The addresses of the bishops to the United Evangelical General Conferences of 1902, 1906, and 1910 contained especially strong warnings against higher criticism. In 1906 H. B. Hartzler and William F. Heil wrote these crisp words:

> Our Church, holding the Bible to be the Word of God, is not afraid that any power can invalidate or destroy it. But neither will she give aid and comfort in her schools or churches to any who are disposed to quarrel with the old Book, or who are wiser in their own conceit than the Book, or who can not teach and preach with full conviction the doctrines of the Book. That there is a real danger of infection of our ministry in the unspiritual intellectual atmosphere of learned, brilliant, audacious discussions in science, theology and Biblical research and criticism, can not be denied.[1]

A highlight of the United Brethren General Conference of 1921 was the appearance of William Jennings Bryan and Robert E. Speer. Warning against "the drift of the world toward the dangerous ground of materialistic unbelief and a substitution of human wisdom and human efficiency for the wisdom of God," they decried "the blighting influence of modern forms of unbelief in public life, in church life, and in school curricula, and in missionary enterprise."[2] In response to their addresses Bishop Weekley (emeritus) introduced a resolution signed by J. H. Dutton and J. P. Landis (retiring president of Bonebrake Theological Seminary) which was adopted by the Conference without discussion. Two items of the resolution sound an almost truculent note:

> 2. That we again affirm our confident faith in the simple teaching, but almighty power of Jesus Christ, God's Son and our Savior, and pledge ourselves unrelentingly to the overthrow of destructive

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[1] General Conference Minutes of the United Evangelical Church, 1906, pp. 44-45. Hereafter cited as GCJUE.

[2] GCJUB, 1921, p. 559.

criticism until the last vestige of it shall be driven from the face of the earth.

3. That this Conference send out its word of warning to our clergy, membership, church boards, and school faculties, that they be on their guard constantly against the subtle encroachment of these dangerous tendencies of our age.[1]

Lefferts Loetscher identifies three patterns of resistance to the new theological forces operative at the turn of the century: re-emphasis on the authority of the church, "scholastic" theology, and pietism (sometimes combined with apocalypticism).[2] Evangelicals and United Brethren occasionally employed the weapons of the Princeton "scholastic" theologians, but their usual pattern of defense was a pietistic clinging to the simple, sacred Bible.

Defense of the Scriptures

Protecting the Pattern of Church Life

Resistance to higher criticism was strong among Evangelicals and United Brethren because it threatened the very nature of their denominational life at several points. Many were certain that to accept the new approach to the Bible would be to smile while committing suicide.

The minister's role.--Several men pointed out that the kind of study of the Bible in which higher critics engaged was hardly compatible with their task as Christian ministers. That task was to preach the Gospel simply and directly in order to lead the sinner to repentance and to guide the believer into more exemplary Christian living. The editor of The Evangelical compared much of the contemporary scholarship with such abstract questions as the medieval debate over the number of angels that could occupy the point of a needle at one time. "We of the United Evangelical Church," he concluded, "take the Book as it is, preach its truths to the people,

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[1] Ibid. [2] Smith, Handy, Loetscher, II, 309-312.

without hair-splitting discussions and fine-spun theories."[1]

In similar language I. L. Kephart pointedly remarked to United Brethren that men are brought to saving faith in Jesus Christ, not by higher and lower criticism, but by "the application of the spirit of God to their hearts." And this cannot come about "by preaching philosophy, discussing modes of baptism, or hair-splitting disquisitions on the finer points in Christian doctrine, but by the faithful, straightforward, intelligent preaching of the word of God."[2]

Kephart also deplored the effect of higher criticism on theological students. He feared they would conclude that they were in school in order to become higher critics. Instead, the purpose of theological training "is to acquire a thorough knowledge of the great truths of Christianity and the ability to utter those truths more effectually and out of a personal knowledge."[3]

Revivalism.--Critics found a basic incompatibility between the moods and concerns of revivalism and the new Biblical studies. Since revivalism was the accepted way in which Evangelicals and United Brethren carried on the Church's primary task of winning the lost to Christ, this was a telling argument. The editor of The Evangelical said this clearly:

> The higher critics, as a rule, are not revivalists. Who ever heard of one of them holding special meetings for the conversion of sinners? Their mission seems to be to befog and mystify the plain truths of the

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[1]"Principles, Polity and Faith of the United Evangelical Church," TE, April 24, 1895, p. 129.

[2]I. L. Kephart, "Doctrine and Life," RT, February 22, 1893, p. 113. Cf. "Doctrine and Life," TE, June 9, 1909, p. 360.

[3]I. L. Kephart, "Study and Preach the Great Truths of the Bible," RT, May 25, 1892, pp. 321-22. Cf. the editorial reference to Dr. M. S. Terry, professor of theology at Garrett, who had advised his students not to preach higher criticism (TE, June 24, 1901, p. 193).

> blessed gospel, the only hope of sinners, and to throw doubt upon the possibility of a full and present salvation, rather than make the mission of Christ effective in the salvation of men.[1]

H. B. Hartzler complained that "no fruits of saved souls appear" where higher criticism has brought its "blight."[2]

United Brethren leaders also warned their people against the danger to their revival efforts. Editor Kephart contended that "no one can preach the doctrines of the 'higher critics' and be a successful soul-winner."[3] Bishop Mills blamed higher criticism for the slight losses in membership which United Brethren had suffered during 1899.[4] When supporters of higher criticism severely censured Billy Sunday and his revival campaigns and methods, the conservative United Brethren editor, J. M. Phillippi, leaped to his defense.[5] In a showdown between revivalism and higher criticism there was little doubt on which side the majority of Evangelicals and United Brethren would take their stand.

Higher criticism vs. missions.--Another danger inherent in higher criticism, so the accusation read, was its tendency to paralyze mission efforts. The two could never be comfortable bedfellows.[6] Because of the

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[1] TE, February 14, 1894, p. 52.

[2] H. B. Hartzler, "The Blight of 'Higher Criticism,'" TE, July 9, 1913, p. 4. Cf. William B. Riley's "Higher Criticism and Its Fruits," QR, XVII (July-August, 1906), 216-225.

[3] I. L. Kephart, "What Should Preachers Do with the Higher Criticism?" RT, March 7, 1894, p. 145.

[4] J. S. Mills, "Our Church and the New Century," QR, XI (April, 1900), 99.

[5] J. M. Phillippi, "Billy Sunday's Critics," RT, August 2, 1916, p. 4.

[6] See E. Fitch Burr, "Concerning 'the Destructive Higher Criticism,'" RT, May 22, 1907, p. 5; TE, June 7, 1911, p. 361; TE, December 4, 1918, p. 6.

importance of missions, this was enough to justify condemnation of higher criticism, argued Hartzler of The Evangelical. Samuel Spreng called it a "refreshing fact" that no "destructive critics" had as yet been asking to go to the mission field.[1]

Infiltration of the Sunday School.--The ugly head of higher criticism also was emerging in Sunday School literature. The International Graded Lessons, which made use of recently discovered psychological principles and the new Biblical studies, were first published in 1910. Although the new lesson series was authorized by the International Sunday-School Association and supported by the major Protestant denominations, the Presbyterians withdrew their support in 1913 because of the appearance in the materials of such liberal ideas as the elimination of belief in the miraculous and the supernatural origin of the Scriptures.[2]

The Rev. Charles Unangst sounded the alarm among United Evangelicals. Condemning the Graded Lesson series for its leaning toward higher criticism, Unangst expressed his preference for the uniform lessons as outlined by the International Sunday-School Committee.[3] Later in the summer of 1913 a fellow minister, the Rev. B. R. Schultze, picked up the theme and brought the discussion of the problem up to date. He reported on the activities of the Bible League of North America, an organization which had formed to defend the Bible against "destructive Higher Criticism." Condemning the

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[1]S. P. Spreng, "A Refreshing Fact," EM, June 17, 1914, p. 5. Infra, p. 281.

[2]Arlo A. Brown, A History of Religious Education in Recent Times (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1922), pp. 103-118; Olmstead, p. 458.

[3]Charles Unangst, "The Question of Graded Lessons in the Sunday Schools," TE, June 11, 1913, pp. 7-8. The Telescope had issued a warning two years before (RT, March 15, 1911, p. 5).

Graded Lessons for their doctrinal aberrations, he too noted their bias toward radical criticism as shown by their quoting Kent and Driver, both of whom "openly cast doubt on the inspiration of portions of God's Word."[1] Schultze reported that a vigorous protest against the new lesson series had been raised at the previous General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He advised United Evangelical Sunday Schools not to introduce any part of this series until the next General Conference of the denomination could consider the problem and provide graded lessons unaffected by the insidious influence of higher criticism.

By 1916 The Evangelical was charging openly (through its quotation of a borrowed article) that the publishing work of the Methodist Church in the United States was in control of destructive critics.[2] Two years later it was happy to report that many Methodist Sunday Schools were dropping the Methodist literature and replacing it with the Sunday School Times,[3] which was gaining popularity among American conservatives.[4]

Higher education.--The threat of higher criticism to the life and vitality of Evangelicals and United Brethren seemed even more dangerous because of the extent to which higher critics were gaining influence in higher education. The three leading church periodicals warned repeatedly against the dangerous teaching which colleges and universities were offering

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[1]B. R. Schultze, "The Graded Lessons--More Evidence of Their Dangerous Tendencies," TE, August 27, 1913, pp. 20-21.

[2]H. B. Hartzler, "The Second Coming of Christ," TE, May 31, 1916, p. 7. See also another editorial attack on Methodist Sunday School literature in TE, January 23, 1918, pp. 6-7. Cf. W. H. Bucks, "The Advanced Thought of the Age," EM, January 21, 1914, p. 4; W. H. Bucks, "A Note of Warning," EM, May 22, 1912, p. 5.

[3]TE, January 14, 1920, p. 6; cf. editorial note about W. M. Stanford (TE, June 3, 1914, p. 16).

[4]See Smith, Handy, Loetscher, II, 313.

the youth of the land. Prominent leaders praised the virtues of their own denominational colleges in comparison with those schools where professors denied the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.[1] A ministerial contributor to the Messenger identified one of the erring institutions as Yale University, apparently because of his acquaintance with the views of Charles Foster Kent of Shorter Bible fame.[2] No doubt he would have toughened his condemnation had he been familiar with the views of Benjamin Bacon and Frank Porter of Yale Divinity School.[3]

The Evangelical was even freer in calling names in its crusade against higher criticism in higher education. In 1901 the editor named Cornell University as one offender; Cornell had decided to supplement its "devotional Bible classes" with lectures on the problems of Biblical criticism.[4] Other institutions condemned were Harvard, the University of Chicago, and the Methodists' seminary at Evanston, Illinois.[5]

Other schools to fall under the ban were Princeton, Wesleyan, Oberlin, Smith and Dickinson.[6] The teaching of Professor Lucius H. Miller was Princeton's folly.[7] The occasion of Wesleyan's condemnation was a book on the Hexateuch written by Dr. Jay Benson Hamilton, the Professor of Ethics

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[1]Professor H. F. Kletzing, "Christian Colleges," EM, September 18, 1894, p. 594. J. B. Kanaga, "Doctrinal Divergencies," EM, October 20, 1897, p. 657.

[2]Albert W. Bender, "Jehoiakim Outdone by Modern Critics," EM, May 5, 1920, p. 5.

[3]Bainton, chap. xvi.

[4]TE, December 9, 1901, p. 385.

[5]Rev. J. H. Keagle, "The 'Higher Education' and the 'Higher Criticism,'" TE, September 8, 1909, p. 566. See H. B. Hartzler, "Infidelity in Broadcloth," TE, March 20, 1912, p. 177; TE, March 25, 1914, p. 5.

[6]"Dickinson College Then and Now," TE, December 19, 1917, p. 6.

[7]H. B. Hartzler, "And Princeton University, Too?" TE, April 8, 1914, p. 5.

and Religion.[1] Likewise, The Evangelical denounced Smith College because of the publication of a defective textbook on the Bible by two of its teachers.[2] Oberlin's hospitality to higher criticism allegedly was evident in its neglect of such doctrines as Regeneration, Atonement, and the Second Coming and in its invitation to Friedrich Loofs, the German scholar, to lecture there.[3]

The experience of his own daughter intensified Editor Hartzler's war on higher criticism in higher education. He identifies the offending institution only as "a great Methodist university," where she had lost her faith as a result of the teaching offered there. She reported, moreover, that all the other girls in her class suffered the same effects. Only after she left the school and "after months of painful struggle" did she recover her faith in God and the Bible.[4]

In the Quadrennial Episcopal Message of Bishops Swengel and Fouke in 1914 they report on the Bible Teachers' Training School (later Biblical Seminary of New York City), the school approved by the United Evangelical Church for theological training of its ministerial students. They explain that the study of the Bible is the center of the curriculum. United Evangelicals can be reassured, for "it is claimed that nothing will so take care of all questions of higher criticism as making the study of the Bible

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[1] TE, September 4, 1918, p. 7.

[2] H. B. Hartzler, "Smith College Teaching Infidelity," TE, December 27, 1916, p. 2.

[3] Loofs was a Ritschlian. H. B. Hartzler, "And Oberlin College, Too!" TE, January 14, 1914, p. 4; H. B. Hartzler, "And Oberlin, Too!" TE, June 30, 1920, p. 6.

[4] H. B. Hartzler, "Woe to That Man!" TE, January 24, 1917, p. 7.

by books absolutely fundamental to all other methods."[1]

Although United Brethren did not experience the same intensity of agitation, they did have their commentators on the contemporary theological scene who warned against the damaging effects of higher critics in educational institutions. The Rev. B. L. Seneff noted in 1900 that "the largest Protestant denomination of Christendom, by action taken at its late General Conference, retained one of the most prominent exponents of the higher criticism as official instructor of her young clerics." Seneff complained that American colleges were following the German universities,

> and the result is an alarming increase of destructive criticism in this country. What else can be expected when the acknowledged leader of this movement is known to reject the greater part of the Pentateuch, Job, and Jonah, to accept at least two writers for Isaiah, and to spiritualize the greater part of the prophecy in both the Old and New Testaments?[2]

Editor Kephart openly named an offending professor and university, accusing Robert Morris Rabb of the University of Chicago of being "rankly committed to the teachings of the destructive higher critics."[3] The United Brethren General Conference of 1921 passed a resolution to make an inquiry into textbooks and faculty members at all the denominational institutions to make sure that they barred the door against "destructive criticism" and "destructive rationalism," an action that the Telescope heartily approved.[4]

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[1]General Conference Proceedings, TE, October 14, 1914, pp. 13-15. Cf. GCJUE, 1910, p. 43.

[2]B. L. Seneff, "The Infidelity of Modern Christendom," QR, XI (October, 1900), 331-32.

[3]RT, August 20, 1902, p. 1068.

[4]"General Conference on Record," RT, June 11, 1921, p. 3.

Defending the Reputation of Scripture

The more serious efforts to defend the Bible against its detractors revolved about two concerns: to protect the Bible's reputation for reliability and to maintain belief in its divine origin.

Trustworthiness of the Bible

Debilitating influence of higher criticism.--In 1900 a leading United Brethren minister, the Rev. C. I. B. Brane, announced that a general decline of faith attributable to higher criticism had already begun. This manifested itself in the weakening of a sense of moral obligation and would eventually result in robbing the Bible of its spiritual and consoling worth.[1] Therefore, devout Christians could not allow Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch to be rejected because it damaged the reputation of the Bible on such crucial religious questions as the ultimate origin of life. Editor Kephart of the Telescope was happy to announce the publication of a book, The Age and Authorship of the Pentateuch, in which the Mosaic authorship was defended by its fifteen authors.[2] The Rev. J. B. Kanaga expressed eloquently the feelings of conservatives that to reject the Mosaic authorship could very well damage the reputation of such central figures in the Bible as Jesus and Paul. He wrote: "Alas, for the unblushing pride and presumption of this little circle of critics who know so much more about

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[1] C. I. B. Brane, "The Decline of Faith," QR, XI (January, 1900), 20-21. See C. J. Kephart, "Some Conclusions of Higher Criticism," RT, January 21, 1903, p. 71.

[2] I. L. Kephart, "Higher Criticism Receives a Hard Blow," RT, June 19, 1895, p. 385. Cf. Spreng's editorial comments on critical theories about Pentateuchal authorship in "Critics' Case Not Proven," EM, February 24, 1897, p. 114. See Editor Bucks' unfavorable review of Arthur Peake's The Bible, Its Origin, Its Significance, and Its Abiding Worth in EM, April 22, 1914, p. 16.

creation than Moses and supersede Paul and sometimes disparage Jesus as one did in the Boston School of Theology when he said, Jesus was not competent to decide the question of critics as to the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch."[1]

The reinforcement of archaeology.--The new findings of archaeology in the nineties began to attract the attention of believers in the Bible--and for more than academic reasons. The men "on the dig" held the potential for increasing confidence in the Scriptures.[2] Frequent articles dotted the pages of the church press, particularly the Quarterly Review, which carried archaeological news as a regular feature in most of its issues.[3] Reports from a United Brethren archaeologist added spice to the pages of the Telescope.[4]

Inerrancy and infallibility.--As the challenges to Biblical authority mounted throughout this period, the word "inerrancy," or its alternate,

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[1]J. B. Kanaga, "Biblical Criticisms from Three Standpoints," EM, May 3, 1899, pp. 273-74. See T. P. Harper, "The Plenary Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures," TE, June 13, 1906, p. 380. In an editorial note I. L. Kephart mentions that Joseph Cook accepted Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch because Jesus did (RT, March 15, 1899, p. 322). Also see Christian Staebler, Introduction to the Word and the Work (Cleveland, Ohio: Publishing House of the Evangelical Association, 1916), p. 38.

[2]Two of the church periodicals carried a series of articles by Professor A. H. Sayce of Oxford on recent archaeological discoveries(A. H. Sayce, "Evidence for the Bible from Archaeological Research," EM, June 12, 1894, pp. 370-71; A. H. Sayce, "Evidence from Archaeological Research," RT, June 13, 1894, pp. 372-73).

[3]"Remarkable Discoveries in Bible Lands," TE, February 22, 1898, p. 57; "The Tombs of Menes and Osiris," TE, May 3, 1898, p. 138; "New Witnesses for the Book," QR, VI (January, 1895), 85; Allan Sutherland, "Excavations at Nippur," QR, XIV (March-April, 1903), 91-97; P. O. Rhodes, "Call to Theology," RT, July 27, 1910, pp. 7-8; W. H. Washinger, "Integrity of the Sacred Scriptures," RT, February 6, 1926, p. 7.

[4]Raymond P. Dougherty, "Spading in Palestine," RT, March 4, 1922, pp. 5-6; RT, June 16, 1928, p. 9; Raymond P. Dougherty, "Discoveries at Beisan," RT, June 23, 1928, pp. 6-7.

"infallibility," appeared more frequently. Inerrancy was not something you could prove--with archaeology or any other tool; it became, nonetheless, an important check for a person's orthodoxy on things scriptural. It shows up in numerous places.[1] Both the 1902 General Conference of the United Evangelical Church and the 1917 General Conference of the United Brethren opened with statements by bishops who were affirming their belief in an inerrant Bible.[2] The United Brethren bishop, E. B. Kephart, who was liberal on some issues in earlier years of his ministry, almost overstates his case for Biblical inerrancy: "No part of the Scriptures can be traced to the perversions or misapprehensions of the human imagination, nor can its theology be resolved into a mistaken history, a corruption of names, or a puerile allegory."[3]

When the fundamentalist controversy rose to the boiling point in the twenties, this word repeatedly appears in pronouncements. Charles Unangst, prominent conservative among United Evangelicals, asserted that the fundamentalist leader, William Bell Riley, was "entirely in accord with the position of our church when he declares that it [evangelical Christianity] embraces three things--an inerrant book, an infallible Christ, and a spiritual experience."[4] Bishop Weekley, the United Brethren warhorse for

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[1]See, for example, S. P. Spreng, "Orthodoxy and Scholarship," EM, July 11, 1893, p. 440; E. M. Spreng, "Permanent Elements of Christianity," EM, September 12, 1893, p. 577; S. P. Spreng, The Sinner and His Saviour, p. 9; S. P. Spreng, What Evangelicals Believe, p. 38; Edwin G. Frye, "Preaching Another Christ," EM, January 5, 1924, p. 2; George Switzer, "What I Believe About the Bible," EM, April 10, 1926, pp. 8-9; Rev. N. Schupp, "Influence of German Theology," EM, April 29, 1896, p. 273.

[2]GCJUE, 1902, p. 44; GCJUB, 1917, p. 4.

[3]E. B. Kephart, Apologetics, p. 19.

[4]Charles G. Unangst, "Evangelical Christianity," TE, October 11, 1921, pp. 8-9.

orthodoxy, contended that the inerrancy of the Bible was an essential Christian doctrine.[1] A veritable tempest arose in United Brethren circles in 1923 when critics charged Protestant foreign missionaries with heterodoxy. The Foreign Mission Society assured the denomination that this general criticism did not apply to United Brethren missionaries. Fearing that some would become "unsettled in their purpose and willingness to support our several foreign fields," the Society passed a resolution reaffirming their "unwavering belief in the inerrancy of the Scriptures as man's only rule of faith and practice."[2]

Another phrase which became dear to the hearts of conservatives was "verbal inspiration." It, too, was a way of confessing the trustworthiness of Scripture. The phrase and the idea became increasingly important until the mid-twenties. The concern is evident in S. P. Spreng's insistence on the exact language of the Bible and in his affirmation that the Bible is, not simply contains, the Word of God.[3] It is a principle clearly enunciated by representatives of all three denominations.[4] In order to defend it,

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[1]W. M. Weekley, Review of Ambassadors of God, by S. Parkes Cadman, RT, May 26, 1923, pp. 14-15.

[2]Minutes of the Eighteenth Annual Meeting of Foreign Mission Society, United Brethren in Christ (Dayton, Ohio: The Otterbein Press, 1923), p. 500. See Dr. S. G. Ziegler, "Keeping the Faith," RT, December 8, 1923, p. 20.

[3]EM, April 21, 1891, p. 248; "Bible Facts vs. Bible Myths," EM, April 30, 1902, pp. 280-81; S. P. Spreng, "The Bible and Its Critics," EM, May 10, 1892, p. 296. See Thomas Bowman, "Is the Bible the Word of God?" EM, November 11, 1914, p. 6; D. A. Mobley wrote: "Plenary inspiration demands that every idea and word and doctrine be the product of the Holy Ghost acting through the writer or speaker as an instrument" ("Inspiration of the Scriptures," QR, III [October, 1892], 337).

[4]Guy Fitch Phelps, "Verbal Inspiration," TE, October 7, 1908, pp. 642-643; J. Q. A. Curry, "The Battle of the Book," TE, May 22, 1918, pp. 9-10; J. Q. A. Curry, "The Battle of the Book," TE, July 31, 1918, pp. 8-9; C. H. Wetherbe, "Verbal Inspiration," RT, July 13, 1910, p. 9.

men such as Bishop Weekley by 1925 were asserting the crassest literalism in their interpretation of the Bible,[1] for William Jennings Bryan had become the man of the hour for United Brethren.[2]

Propositional revelation.--The effort to maintain the trustworthiness of Scripture by asserting its inerrancy and infallibility received reinforcement from the view of revelation held by conservatives. Evangelicals and United Brethren traditionally regarded it as informational and propositional, and few wished to change now. Two books on Christian doctrine written by leaders in the Evangelical Church illustrate this reluctance to alter a revered position. Neither recognizes that revelation has much to do with the historical process. Rather, both place emphasis on the Bible as a book. Bishop Samuel Spreng makes the assertion that "the Christian Religion is a religion of facts that can be known as definitely and positively as the facts of history and science," thus clearly making the bifurcation between Christian revelation and history.[3]

Here and elsewhere in the literature of both Evangelicals and United Brethren, men regarded revelation primarily as the communication of "useful information to his children."[4] Both E. B. Kephart and S. J. Gamertsfelder were beginning to think of revelation partly in terms of history--that what was important "was what God did for Abraham rather than what He said to him."[5] But Gamertsfelder could still affirm that "the essence of revelation

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[1]W. M. Weekley, "A Few Questions," RT, August 15, 1925, p. 9.

[2]B. F. Daugherty, "Christ of the Bible and of Modern Thought," RT, January 9, 1926, p. 14.

[3]Spreng, What Evangelicals Believe, pp. 11, 29-30. Also see Staebler, p. 24.

[4]E. B. Kephart, Apologetics, p. 8.

[5]Gamertsfelder, Systematic Theology, p. 23.

consists of a thought of God projected into the mind and heart of man and recognized as such in his own consciousness."[1] For men less receptive to newer Biblical scholarship this conception of revelation formed a significant part of their defense of the Bible's trustworthiness.

The supernatural origin of the Bible

The other way of maintaining the Bible's reputation was to contend in various ways for its divine origin. This argument was tied to a strict doctrine of the supernatural. Naturalistic Biblical interpretation was the equivalent of a denial of the Bible's divine origin.

One of the most vigorous battlers for supernaturalism was Samuel P. Spreng, long-lived Evangelical leader. Ever since his youth, when he used to bribe his sister Emma (S. J. Gamertsfelder's wife) and brother Ezra to listen to him preach from the haystack, Sammy Spreng thoroughly enjoyed proclaiming and defending the Word of God. When his presiding elder urgently appealed for ministerial recruits, he left college to preach, and he retired from the bishopric very reluctantly at the advanced age of seventy-seven. As Spreng approached his ninetieth year, his feelings were hurt because he received fewer and fewer invitations to preach.[2] For twenty years (1887-1907) the editorial chair of the Messenger was his pulpit. From that vantage point the naturalistic assumptions of higher critics did not escape his notice. In an early editorial against the assertion of multiple authorship of Isaiah he makes the accusation that the aim of higher critics "is to introduce naturalism into the Bible, and eliminate as far as possible,

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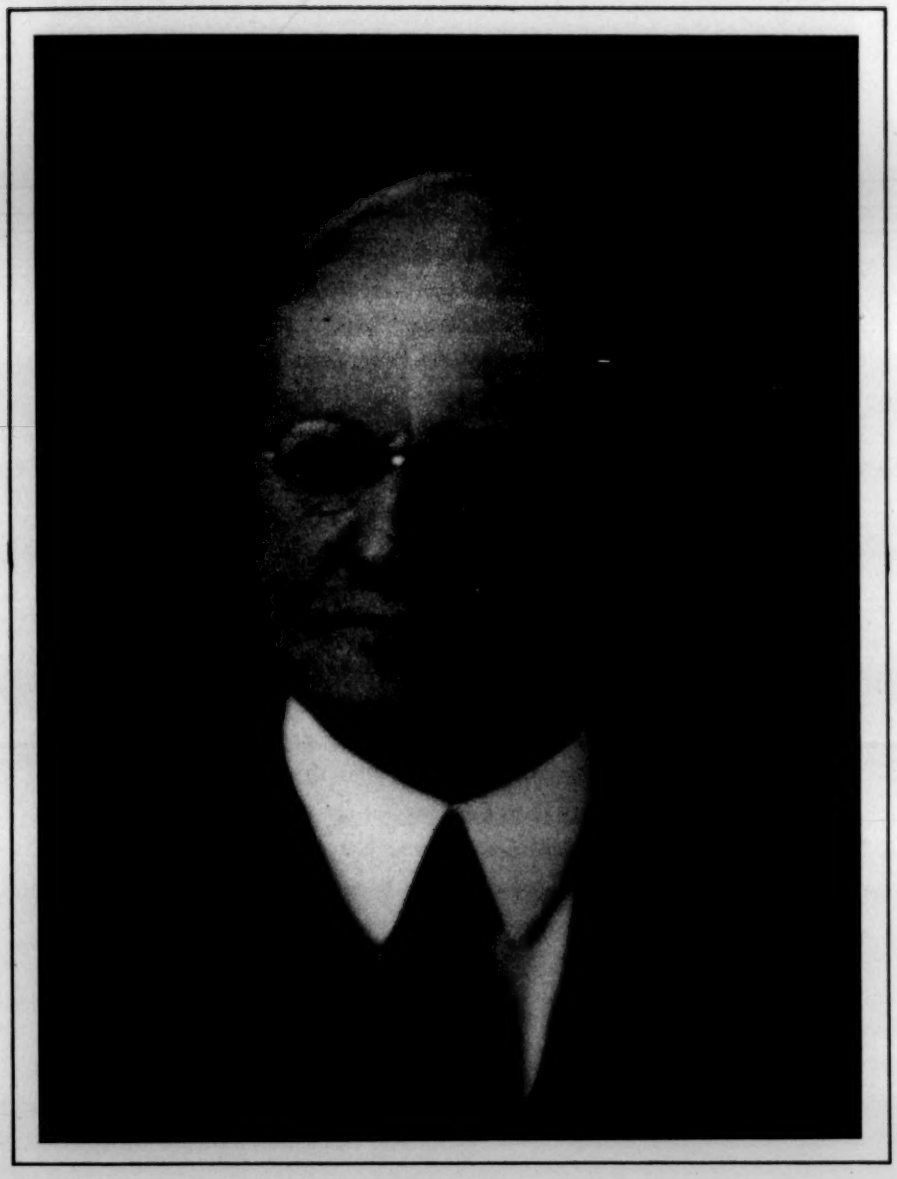
[1] Ibid.

[2] Personal Interview with Ruth and Gordon Gamertsfelder, January 5, 1966.



S. P. SPRENG
(Courtesy of Miss Ruth Gamertsfelder, Naperville, Illinois)

the supernatural."[1] In a later editorial he intensified his indictment of naturalism, linking it with higher criticism's approach to miracles:

> It denudes religion of its chief glory, and paralyses the higher spiritual aspirations, because it eliminates the supernatural from revelation and the miraculous from experience. And when it does that it takes away that which is essential. Without the supernatural there is no key to the interpretation of the Word of God.
>
> Religion rests upon a supernatural basis. . . . When we deny the reality of miracles we have no key to the interpretation of the supernatural book. This is the chief and vital defect of this whole system of so-called Higher Criticism, that it seeks to eliminate, as far as possible, the miraculous element from the Bible. It is true it admits the supernatural Person of the Redeemer, but it does it grudgingly and only because it is forced to do so. . . . Thus its essential tendency is not to strengthen faith, but to foster unfaith, not to awaken higher spiritual aspirations but to quench them and give to religious life a secular tendency.[2]

Strident, too, were the voices of those who pointed out the rationalism of many higher critics. One of these expressed well the consensus of conservatives when he wrote:

> It is the office of reason to ascertain whether God has ever spoken to us, whether the Scriptures are really his word; satisfied on that point, it is bound to submit implicitly to the divine revelation, whatever it may be. Reason itself decides intuitively that God's word is to be believed. Inspiration can never demand our assent to what is

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[1] S. P. Spreng, "The Spirit and Aims of Higher Criticism," EM, May 17, 1892, p. 312. See "The Bible and Higher Criticism," EM, January 2, 1894, pp. 2-3. Cf. W. J. Zuck, "Is the Bible an Open Question?" QR, II (July, 1891), 202; J. P. E. Kumler, "Tendencies Threatening Bible Authority," QR, IV (April, 1893), 115, 117; I. L. Kephart, "Destructive Higher Criticism," RT, June 5, 1895, p. 353. The Rev. D. Berger repeats Kumler's contention--that some Biblical scholars seem less eager to arrive at truth than to eliminate the supernatural element from the Bible ("The Higher Criticism," RT, February 8, 1899, pp. 166-67). Also see C. H. Wetherbe, "No Compromise," RT, March 8, 1911, pp. 11-12.

[2] S. P. Spreng, "The Higher Criticism and Biblical Interpretation," EM, July 6, 1904, p. 424. See also his "Orthodoxy and Scholarship," EM, July 11, 1893, p. 440. Cf. J. W. Etter's review of Current Discussions in Theology in QR, I (October, 1890), 387, in which he argued that there was "too much space given to German writers for American students, and too much hospitality shown works which minimize the supernatural element in the Bible." Also see "Dr. Abbott a Dangerous Teacher," RT, February 24, 1897, pp. 227-28; C. H. Lilly, "'Is the Bible God's Word?'" RT, February 18, 1922, pp. 7-8.

> demonstrably false, but it may declare many truths that we unaided by revelation could never discern. If revelation is always to conform to our judgment, then it is no revelation.[1]

Reuben Yeakel, the retired Evangelical bishop, called higher criticism "a rationalistic dissecting process which seeks to destroy the inner organism of the Bible, and eliminate the divine element from the blessed book."[2] This aspect of higher criticism fell under the facile pen of H. B. Hartzler when he wrote: "A top-heavy 'higher critic' is a man 'wise in his own conceit,' who lays hold of the Bible, stretches its vital, pulsing sentences, paragraphs, chapters, books upon his library table, dismembers, dissects, parses, analyzes, construes, misconstrues, perverts, disputes, reconstructs them; measures, weighs, smells, tastes them; applies every test he knows to confirm his prejudgments--<u>but he does not know what the inspired writers</u> say!"[3]

In a strikingly perceptive review of Lyman Abbott's <u>Evolution of Christianity</u> Anton Huelster bears down upon the theme that the Bible is more than the product of wise men. He very ably points out the implications of Abbott's dedication to the principle of divine immanence:

> If inspiration is a universal fact and life and capacity to apprehend the truth, which underlie it, are progresive, must not then of necessity enlightened men of the 19th century have a clearer and more accurate conception of the truth than even the authors of the Bible had?

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[1] J. P. E. Kumler, <u>QR</u>, IV, 113. Other contributors to the <u>Quarterly Review</u> cited the evils which had resulted from this merely rationalistic approach to things religious. One called higher criticism "only the rehashing of German rationalism" (Rev. M. Fulcomer, "Holy History," <u>QR</u>, XVII [May-June, 1906], 158). See W. F. Berger, "Present Status of the Protestant Church," <u>QR</u>, V (October, 1894), 335-47.

[2] R. Yeakel, <u>The Church Discipline, Doctrine and Confession of Faith</u> (Cleveland, Ohio: Publishing House of the Evangelical Association, 1899), p. 22.

[3] H. B. Hartzler, "The Top-Heavy Higher Critic," <u>TE</u>, June 6, 1917, p. 7. See <u>RT</u>, June 10, 1891, pp. 354-55.

> And if so, how can it continue to be the text-book of revealed religion?[1]

S. P. Spreng also saw that if one were to have a meaningful doctrine of revelation he could not simply equate the truths of the Bible with "discovery."[2] He doubted that the Christian could consistently continue to affirm the divine origin of the Bible if he held its authority in abeyance until hearing from the higher critics.[3] This fear that the Bible might lose its supernatural status led the defenders of the faith to contend for the literal accuracy of all the miracle stories of the Bible, even the nautical episode of Jonah.[4]

Dissolution of prophecy.--Protestants had long counted on the predictive prophecies of the Bible as impressive evidence--if not proof--of the inspiration of the Scriptures. Hence, conservatives came to view the investigations of higher criticism in the latter part of the Old Testament as but one more indication of their intention to destroy completely men's beliefs in the inspiration and authority of the Bible. Editor Hartzler mourned that "the prophets are delivered over into the hands of the ruthless 'Higher Criticism.'"[5] Conservatives feared that naturalistic explanations of the prophets would further reduce men's faith in a supernatural God. The statement of Bishop E. B. Kephart, who was on the liberal side of

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[1]Anton Huelster, "Pointers on Mr. Abbott's 'Evolution of Christianity,'" TE, October 19, 1892, pp. 329-30.

[2]Spreng, The Sinner and His Savior, p. 11.

[3]S. P. Spreng, "The Teaching of the Bible vs. The Teaching of the Critics," EM, June 13, 1906, pp. 4-5.

[4]I. L. Kephart, "Jonah and the Whale," RT, December 11, 1907, p. 5; infra, p. 295.

[5]TE, May 27, 1914, p. 5. Cf. Editor Spreng's "Orthodoxy and Scholarship," EM, July 11, 1893, p. 440.

most issues, is typical: "We are not to suppose, as some have done, that the prophets arrived at their knowledge of the future events about which they wrote through any process of reasoning, based on their knowledge of God and his hatred of sin or love of righteousness, nor from any scientific deductions based on their knowledge of the world's past national life; but we must be willing to accept their own statements as to their source of knowledge of the future."[1] I. L. Kephart was willing to argue that prophecy is simply "history written prior to the transpiring of the events recorded."[2] This was part of the attempt to insure that men would fully recognize and accept the divine origin of the Bible.[3]

An Arsenal of Assorted Arguments

Premature victory celebrations.--One method of attack on liberal Biblical scholarship was to assert publicly that it had no adherents within the denomination. This put on the defensive all those who had some interest in the activities and results of a scholarly approach to the Bible which made use of the tools of higher criticism. This was especially evident in the Evangelical Association.[4] In 1907 the General Conference of the

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[1]E. B. Kephart, "Prophecy," QR, VIII (April, 1897), 175. See S. P. Spreng, "The Spirit and Aims of Higher Criticism," EM, May 17, 1892, p. 312; William Alfred Quayle, "The Authority of the Bible," EM, January 20, 1915, p. 1; Staebler, p. 62; Review of Daniel's Great Prophecy.--The Eastern Question. The Kingdom, by the Rev. Nathanael West, EM, October 5, 1898, p. 632.

[2]I. L. Kephart, "Prophecy and Christianity," RT, March 18, 1891, p. 161. See RT, February 18, 1891, p. 97.

[3]See S. L. Umbach, "Evidences of Divine Origin of the Bible," EM, LVII (1903), passim; "The Supernatural Book," EM, February 10, 1897, p. 88.

[4]In 1892 the editor of the Messenger rejoiced that the denomination was not troubled by higher criticism ("Some Results of Higher Criticism," EM, May 31, 1892, p. 344). J. B. Kanaga adopted the same line in an article four years later ("Present Status of Biblical Criticism," EM,

denomination adopted a report on the "State of the Church" in which it declared: "We rejoice that our Church holds firmly to the whole Bible as the Word of God, unshaken in our faith by the subtle influence of anti-scriptural scholarship."[1] Bishop Breyfogel echoed these sentiments in an address given in 1922 in eastern Pennsylvania before a convention of Evangelicals called together to insure the success of the recent denominational union. He rejoiced that "the blighting mildew of an irreverent scholarship and destructive criticism has not fallen upon our ministry or cursed our theological seminaries which have with singular fidelity adhered to all the essentials of our Christian faith."[2]

The conviction that the denomination had escaped infiltration by higher criticism was on one occasion suggested as the very reason for denominational existence. Neither Evangelicals nor United Brethren had come into being as denominations in order to protect against defamations of the Scriptures, of course, but the United Evangelical General Conference of 1918 implied that United Evangelicals could well regard the defense of the Scriptures as a sufficient raison d'etre. In a report on "The Mission of the Church" adopted by the Conference they said:

> In these days when there is so much yielding to destructive criticism in some quarters there is great need of smaller Churches that are

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September 23, 1896, p. 609. After approving Harnack's assertion as to the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, Charles Wesley Naumann asserted in 1897 that "as far as my experience and observation have gone Higher Criticism has not yet entered the Evangelical Association" ("The Higher Criticism of the Bible," EM, September 8, 1897, p. 562). See Victor D. Chaffin, "The Polity and Doctrines of the Evangelical Association," EM, August 8, 1900, pp. 498-99.

[1] EM, October 16, 1907, p. 4. See "The Holy Scriptures," EM, August 16, 1911, p. 2; Episcopal Message to General Conference, EM, October 7, 1903, pp. 627, 630-31.

[2] TE, December 26, 1922, p. 15.

orthodox and true to the teaching of the entire Book of God. The Churches that are true and faithful will be the Churches God will use and honor in the salvation of the world.[1]

Irreverence of higher critics.--What griped the conservative lover of Scripture as much as anything else was the apparent impiety of the higher critic. In 1893 the editor of The Evangelical offered this opinion of those scholars engaged in higher criticism:

> There is seemingly no limit to the insolence, irreverence, assumption and presumption of the average modern Bible critic, who feels himself especially called to discredit the Holy Scriptures, and who is never lacking in a species of bold effrontery which is to serve as a proof of his calling. The utter gratuity of all such efforts need not be argued. An exchange aptly says: "If those men have no personal use for the Bible, we say, why do they not let it alone? Nobody is seeking to force it upon them."[2]

This kind of criticism became more bitter as the years passed. One of the strongest-worded indictments was that of the Rev. N. A. Barr in an article which appeared in The Evangelical in 1901:

> The people who find fault with the Bible, usually known by the high sounding name, "Higher Critics," (carping critics would be a more appropriate designation) mostly masquerade in the garb of superior learning, parade a long array of imposing, awe-inspiring honorary titles, and make great pretensions as original, independent and advanced thinkers. They send out before them in all directions forerunners to proclaim their praises as profound scholars. These destructionists, chronic fault finders, or higher critics, as they love to be called, have lived to trouble the church and worry well-meaning, but weak-minded Christian people, in all ages, from the days of Moses on down to the present time, and they have occupied every position of honor in the church. As in the past, so now, they are found among bishops, editors of religious papers, college presidents, theological professors, presiding elders and occupants of prominent pulpits; but, instead of being faithful teachers of the Word, truthful shepherds of God's flock and devoted pastors of their people, they are thieves; they lie awake at night and spend many of their waking moments, watching for a chance to break into, undermine, break down and scatter to the four winds of heaven the truth of divine revelation.[3]

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[1] "Episcopal Message," TE, October 16, 1918, p. 20.

[2] TE, March 15, 1893, p. 84.

[3] N. A. Barr, "Higher Critics, the Troublers of Israel," TE, June 24, 1901, p. 194. Barr was the author of the series of articles on "Boy Scouts of Patriarchal Times" (Supra, p. 268).

In 1912 the editor of The Evangelical called higher critics "baptized infidels" and "Satan's agents," advising his readers to "let them be to thee as heathen men and publicans."[1] Four years later he quoted the Telescope as saying that the European war was less dangerous than such antagonists as "German rationalism, French infidelity, English deism, and destructive criticism." The teaching of higher criticism is "Putrefaction" and the source of it is the University of Chicago, Yale, and Union Theological Seminary.[2]

These sentiments of United Evangelicals were also common in the Evangelical Association. Editor Spreng of the Messenger accused higher critics of attempting "to break down reverence for and belief in the Word of God" by their accusations that their opponents made a fetish of the Bible.[3] He damned higher criticism by linking it with Tübingen, Baur, Strauss, Renan, Darwinian evolution, and Haeckelian materialism. The whole movement was intertwined with infidelity. In fact, wrote the editor, "the first higher critic was a French physician named Jean Astruc, an atheist and a libertine."[4] Spreng protested against the spirit of haughty arrogance of the higher critics: "Like all professed champions of liberalism, they are themselves the most intolerant theorists."[5]

In 1895 Western Reserve University sponsored a summer school of theology in Cleveland, Ohio. The faculty contained both liberal and conservative scholars. Spreng trained his guns on one of them, Benjamin Bacon, whom Yale Divinity School had appointed to the chair of New Testament that

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[1] TE, April 10, 1912, p. 232. [2] TE, August 30, 1916, p. 3.

[3] S. P. Spreng, "Bibliolatry," EM, May 26, 1891, p. 328.

[4] S. P. Spreng, "The Bible and Its Critics," EM, May 10, 1892, p. 296.

[5] S. P. Spreng, "The Spirit and Aims of Higher Criticism," EM, May 17, 1892, p. 312.

very summer.[1] Pointing out that he had "made havoc of all the traditional views of scholars and common people, concerning history," he characterized him as "the most extreme exponent of the higher criticism this side the water" and as "a reckless iconoclast who, devoid of reverence for sacred things, and of insight into spiritual things, trifles with the most sacred facts in the world."[2]

The apparent irreverence of higher critics also offended United Brethren. Several writers warned against the lack of respect for the Bible which higher criticism seemed to encourage.[3] H. H. Fout of the Quarterly Review saw a place for reverent criticism but concluded that "liberal Christianity was merely a misleading phrase intended too often to cover up a destructive Biblical criticism which was really a form of "infidelity and rationalism."[4]

Charles Briggs' inaugural address in 1891 and the controversy which followed it furnish an example of what United Brethren and Evangelicals regarded as an irreverent approach to the Bible.[5] Editor I. L. Kephart wrote

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[1]Bainton, pp. 181-182.

[2]S. P. Spreng, "The Cleveland Summer School of Theology," EM, July 17, 1895, p. 456. George Park Fisher of Yale Divinity School was likewise afraid of Bacon's "radical views." Because of Fisher's fear, Bacon went to Yale with only a one-year trial appointment (Bainton, pp. 181-82). Also see ibid., pp. 213-219.

In an attempt to account for the spread of some of the ideas propagated by higher critics, Solomon Hoy, a minister of the Association, attributed them to egotism and a failure to study the Bible with prayer ("The Reason Why," EM, February 24, 1897, pp. 113-14). See S. P. Spreng, "The Bible and Science," EM, May 31, 1899, p. 344.

[3]See J. E. Kleffman, "The Higher Criticism," QR, III (January, 1892), 22-27.

[4]H. H. Fout, "Bulwarks of the Christian Religion," QR, X (July, 1899), 280. See W. F. Pease, "The Higher Criticism," RT, May 27, 1896, p. 341; L. Heinmiller, "Theological Unrest," EM, June 30, 1891, p. 401.

[5]Supra, pp. 234-235.

a rather friendly editorial on the address, commenting that "the learned doctor said many good things" in it. However, he felt that Briggs showed bad judgment in his "egotistic" reply to Dr. Shedd in the exchange that ensued after the address.[1] Later, Kephart became convinced that Briggs rejected the inspiration of the Bible.[2] When the Briggs case was about to come up before the General Assembly, Kephart's sentiments had so crystallized that he wrote this comment on Briggs' acquittal by his presbytery:

> His attitude as here assumed is the attitude of an enemy of an inerrant Bible, rather than the attitude of an unprejudiced investigator. We do not say that it is intentionally so, but it is so, nevertheless; and we can not see how the General Assembly, to which the case is to be carried, can fail to reverse the verdict of the presbytery and convict him on this point; for it is a point that involves a fundamental doctrine.
>
> It is certain that Dr. Briggs' attitude on this point can not be helpful to Christianity. In fact, it must more or less injure it.[3]

Evangelicals were too preoccupied with internal problems that were dividing their denomination to give much attention to the Briggs affair in 1891. When they did become aware of him they were unanimous in their condemnation.[4] His ordination in the Episcopal Church in 1899 furnished the

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[1] I. L. Kephart, "Dr. Briggs Against Himself," RT, May 27, 1891, p. 322. See Professor W. J. Zuck, "Is the Bible an Open Question?" QR, II, (July, 1891), 197-209.

[2] RT, June 10, 1891, p. 355.

[3] RT, January 11, 1893, p. 18; RT, June 7, 1893, p. 355. See the editorial note about Dr. A. J. F. Behrends' articles on Briggs and higher criticism in RT, February 6, 1895, p. 82. Twelve years later Kephart happily reported that Briggs was returning to the faith, basing his judgment on a report he had received about a paper on the Virgin Birth which Briggs had recently delivered and all auditors had considered quite orthodox (RT, May 15, 1907, p. 3). Smith, Handy, Loetscher point out that his theology was, "on the whole, remarkably conservative" (II, 276).

[4] S. P. Spreng, "Bibliolatry," EM, May 26, 1891, p. 328; Rev. Augustus Krecker, "The Signs of the Times," EM, June 12, 1894, pp. 369-70; Rev. Augustus Krecker, "The Signs of the Times," EM, June 19, 1894, pp. 385-86; "Briggs and the Bible," EM, June 26, 1894, p. 204; J. B. Kanaga, "Present Status of Biblical Criticism," EM, September 23, 1896, p. 609. Also see W. H. Bucks' criticism of Briggs' address at the World's Congress of Religions at the Chicago World's Fair ("Doctor Briggs on the Truthfulness of the Scriptures," EM, September 4, 1894, pp. 561-62).

occasion for a final blast at him by Spreng.[1]

A haven for heretics.--Higher criticism incurred the wrath of conservatives because of its association with the new liberal theology. This affinity convinced many opponents that higher criticism was little more than a shelter for heretics.[2] The editor of The Evangelical noted that a prominent minister of Pennsylvania who supported "destructive criticism" also denied the inspiration of the Bible, redemption by the blood, regeneration by the Holy Spirit, future judgment and everlasting punishment.[3]

Spokesmen for the Evangelical Association were even clearer in equating higher criticism with heterodoxy. Spreng could be persuasive with his ad hominem arguments:

> Every once in a while heterodoxy comes out of its hole to air its plumage, under some high-sounding name. Just not it is "Higher Criticism," but it is the same old bird of evil. It nearly always is championed by some specially smart pulpiteers, whose intellects are so broad that they can no longer work in the old-fashioned Gospel harness. These broad-minded men become the heroes of the hour, and enjoy the applause of skeptics, free-thinkers, and worldlings generally.[4]

J. B. Kanaga criticized Bishop Vincent of the Methodist Church for giving aid and comfort to "radical leaders of the destructive so-called higher criticism," adding that he is not surprised that Vincent "should take around to his conferences a pantheistic philosopher to lecture to the

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[1] S. P. Spreng, "The Case of Dr. Briggs," EM, May 17, 1899, pp. 312-13.

[2] G. W. Imboden, "The Higher Criticism," TE, June 17, 1896, pp. 193-194; "Quadrennial Episcopal Message," TE, October 3, 1906, p. 631; Charles Moyer, "The Holy Bible," TE, August 1, 1922, pp. 16-17.

[3] TE, April 24, 1918, p. 7. Cf. Hartzler's editorial condemning Oberlin College for similar reasons ("And Oberlin, Too!" TE, June 30, 1920, p. 6).

[4] EM, June 16, 1891, p. 376. This sentiment is echoed by William H. Bucks ("There is No Permanence in Destructive Criticism," EM, February 11, 1920, p. 4).

preachers on Christian Ethics."[1]

United Brethren took practically the same line. In 1902 the editor of the Telescope maintained that "all destructive higher critics necessarily deny the divinity of Christ."[2] Other defenders of the faith condemned higher critics for their support of the doctrine of "probation after death," associating them with "confessed infidels, atheists, or men rejecting fundamental Christian doctrines," such as Bolingbroke, Voltaire, Astruc, Eichhorn, Edelmann, Bahrdt, Kuenen, and Wellhausen. "Is it not something against the higher criticism," asked the Rev. E. Fitch Burr, "that it comes to us through such hands as those of Semler, Edelman, Bahrdt, Nicolai, Strauss, and Wellhausen?"[3]

The temptation to obscurantism.--Many of these commentators on the activities and concerns of higher criticism did not possess a very clear conception of the field of Biblical studies. The bishops' address to the United Evangelical General Conference of 1902 shows that they saw little difference between higher and lower criticism.

> We have no fear of heresies as long as our ministers and people have a sound Christian experience and are filled with the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is the best conservator of orthodoxy. The Bible is the only inerrant source of Spiritual truth. We have not the ballast of the decrees of ancient and modern councils, we respect their doctrinal definitions and teachings, but they are not binding upon us. But we do stand solid and in an unequivocal manner upon God's Holy Word, and upon our articles of faith, based upon it. We resist with all our power the attempts of "higher" and "lower" critics to weaken the faith of the church in the divine revelation.[4]

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[1] J. B. Kanaga, "Biblical Criticisms from Three Standpoints," EM, May 3, 1899, pp. 273-74.

[2] I. L. Kephart, "The Higher Critics and Christ," RT, May 28, 1902, p. 675.

[3] E. Fitch Burr, "Concerning 'the Destructive Higher Criticism,'" RT, April 17, 1907, p. 5. See "Probation after Death," RT, April 29, 1908, p.5.

[4] GCJUE, 1902, p. 44.

If leaders were not familiar with developments in Biblical studies, the interest of United Evangelicals in outright obscurantism is not surprising. For instance, The Evangelical published part of the text of the speech which Governor Hoch of Kansas delivered before the United Brethren General Conference in 1905. Editor W. M. Stanford approved of Hoch's approach to the Bible, of which this is a sample:

> My ideal preacher is a man who believes the Bible, who takes in the story of Jonah and the whale without a shadow of doubt; who is not afraid of science; who has the faith if man can connect the world through scientific discovery so that we can converse thousands of miles without wires, that his God can also work miracles. That if man can build a city like Chicago and New York, what must be the city that the Almighty has constructed? A preacher that recognizes that he who criticises the Bible only shows his ignorance; a preacher who is not afraid of the higher critics of to-day, that knows that if man can, by the aid of the X-Rays, see through a man, that his God can see down into the hearts of all mankind.[1]

The editor of the Telescope likewise defended a literal interpretation of Jonah, using a large fish (fifteen tons) currently on display in the Marshall Field store in Chicago as an illustration of how large fish become, thus "proving" that the whale had no serious trouble in swallowing Jonah; hence, Biblical Christians were expected to have no trouble swallowing the story.[2]

The appeal to authority.--One mode of attack was the simple appeal to authority--to men who for one reason or another stood high in the estimation of church people. A few were within these denominations themselves. In his funeral sermon for the Rev. Henry Rohland, a prominent minister of the United Evangelicals' Illinois Conference, Bishop Dubs commended him for

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[1] TE, May 24, 1905, p. 328.

[2] RT, February 18, 1914, pp. 5-6. Cf. S. P. Spreng, "Absurdities of Higher Criticism," EM, April 15, 1896, p. 242; E. B. Utt, "The Inerrancy of the Scriptures," TE, October 10, 1899, p. 322.

his resistance to higher criticism.[1] Better-known leaders were Dubs himself and Bishop Weekley of the United Brethren. Dubs delivered his lectures on higher criticism on many occasions,[2] and Weekley, by his frequent assaults, made himself persona non grata to all those who had the slightest sympathy for higher criticism.[3]

American church leaders of other denominations whom conservatives considered authorities were Dr. L. W. Munhall, a noted evangelist;[4] James W. Mendenhall, editor of the Methodist Review;[5] and Atticus G. Haywood, Sr., noted Southern Methodist leader.[6] The list includes such diverse figures as Joseph Cook,[7] Professor D. S. Margoliouth of Oxford,[8] President Charles Cuthbert Hall of Union Theological Seminary,[9] R. A. Torrey, the noted evangelist,[10] Dr. William H. Green of Princeton,[11] and William Jennings Bryan.[12]

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[1] TE, May 1, 1895, p. 141.

[2] TE, August 15, 1899, p. 261; W. M. Stanford, "Character, Life and Labors," TE, April 7, 1915, pp. 4-7.

[3] W. R. Funk, "Continuity of Achievement," RT, January 23, 1926, p. 8.

[4] TE, August 15, 1899, p. 261.

[5] J. B. Kanaga, "A Crowned Defender of Orthodoxy," EM, October 11, 1892, p. 642.

[6] J. B. Kanaga, "A Book for the Times," EM, March 20, 1894, pp. 177-78.

[7] J. B. Kanaga, "Biblical Criticisms from Three Standpoints," EM, May 3, 1899, pp. 273-74.

[8] "The Higher Criticism Unhorsed," EM, May 15, 1901, pp. 306-307.

[9] "Criticism and Gospel Preaching," EM, November 15, 1905, p. 728.

[10] S. P. Spreng, "The Torrey-Alexander Meetings in Toronto," EM, February 7, 1906, pp. 4-5; "The Coming Revival Effort in Cleveland," EM, November 28, 1906, p. 4; S. P. Spreng, "The Cleveland Revival," EM, January 30, 1907, p. 4.

[11] RT, March 14, 1900, p. 322.

[12] W. J. Bryan, "Mr. Bryan and the 'Higher Critic,'" EM, September 19, 1921, p. 1.

A call to scholarship.--A few advisers urged those who would make war on higher criticism to proceed by becoming better scholars than those they opposed. The editors of The Evangelical and the Telescope both advised their readers to study the books listed by Bishop W. F. Mallalieu of the Methodist Church as antidotes to higher criticism.[1] Mallalieu had suggested that his ministers "forego a large part of the time devoted to light and unprofitable reading, and master these standard works, that scatter to the four winds of heaven the mists and fog banks of destructive rationalistic 'Higher Criticism.'"[2]

Samuel P. Spreng of the Messenger assured his ministerial readers that they need not apologize for failing to discuss the speculations of higher criticism in the pulpit. Neither the average congregation nor its pastor is competent to make decisions on many questions that have arisen in Biblical criticism, he argued. Only well-trained Biblical scholars can decide them. The place for discussion of these issues is in "the theological class-room, and in the pages of theological reviews."[3] Echoing some of Spreng's sentiments was the able presiding elder of the Ohio Conference, J. B. Kanaga. In a series of articles on Biblical criticism he advised against adopting the results of critical study too quickly. However, Kanaga's respect for scholarship led him to warn against the man "who declaims loftily against all forms of critical Bible study," for he only "betrays his intellectual stagnation and utter incompetency for intelligent

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[1]"Faith-making Books," TE, December 3, 1903, pp. 776-77; "Destructive Higher Criticism Poison," RT, June 10, 1903, p. 709.

[2]"Faith-making Books," TE, December 3, 1903, pp. 776-77. Included in the list of sixteen books were four by W. H. Green, one by L. W. Munhall, and one by D. S. Margoliouth (Supra, p. 296).

[3]S. P. Spreng, "Some Results of Higher Criticism," EM, May 31, 1892, p. 344.

religious leadership."[1]

Victory in sight.--Those who led the assault on higher criticism always manifested confidence that the Bible would win the contest with its detractors. Sometimes this takes the form of whistling in the dark, but many are the voices that express faith that the power of the Bible will not be destroyed. In denominational journal and episcopal message United Evangelicals asserted the impregnability of the Bible,[2] confidently announcing: "The Bible will take care of itself."[3]

Likewise, S. P. Spreng was proclaiming the invulnerability and invincibility of the Bible in the Evangelical Association.[4] He offered soothing reassurance to worried conservatives:

> Be not alarmed as to the results of this destructive assault. The Higher Critics are not going to hurt the Bible ultimately. They will be a goad to Christian scholarship, and men in love with the Bible will unearth from ruined cities and buried monuments thrilling corroborations of the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible. . . . Every assault has but left the Bible stronger. Years ago we used to have books on the conflict between science and the Bible. Many were alarmed, uneasy. Evolution became a perfect scarecrow to many. Now science is found to be a strong ally of the Bible, if the Bible needs an ally. So far as natural science has reached ultimate truth and settled results, it is in perfect harmony with the Bible. Nothing in the Bible is shown to be really unscientific. Ignorance prated about the unscientific character of the Scriptures, but full knowledge has revealed that Ignorance was mistaken. It will be so with Higher Criticism. The Bible will survive. No harm will come to it.[5]

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[1]J. B. Kanaga, "Present Status of Biblical Criticism," EM, September 30, 1896, p. 625.

[2]TE, January 18, 1893, p. 20.

[3]Episcopal Message, TE, October 3, 1906, p. 631.

[4]S. P. Spreng, "Its Power Fully Tested," EM, July 14, 1891, p. 440; EM, January 12, 1892, p. 24; S. P. Spreng, "Orthodoxy and Scholarship," EM, July 11, 1893, p. 440; E. M. Spreng, "Permanent Elements of Christianity," EM, September 12, 1893, p. 577.

[5]S. P. Spreng, "Some Results of Higher Criticism," EM, May 31, 1892, p. 344.

The same theme appears in one section of the Episcopal Message to the Evangelical General Conference in 1919, and Spreng may well have written it. Referring to the attack of destructive Biblical criticism on the Bible, the Message affirmed succinctly: "It will not succeed."[1]

The same assurance infused United Brethren opponents of higher criticism. The editor of the Quarterly Review, J. W. Etter, classed "the speculations of the Higher Criticism" with those of "the new Pre-millenarianism" and "the crudities of the New Theology" and predicted that they all would soon pass away. He rejoiced that the new United Brethren Confession of Faith was silent on all three.[2] Others took comfort in the fact that higher critics often disagreed with one another. This they adduced as evidence that the whole endeavor was evanescent.[3] In their Quadrennial Address to General Conference in 1901 the bishops took the same approach, somewhat overconfidently announcing that recent archaeological investigations had completely confirmed the Word of God over against the satanic work of the "destructive form of 'higher criticism.'"[4]

This crescendo of voices raised in opposition to higher criticism shows that Evangelicals and United Brethren almost unanimously resisted these tides of Biblical criticism that threatened their very reason for being. What began as a rather cautious investigation of the implications

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[1] EM, October 8, 1919, p. 3.

[2] J. W. Etter, "Our Confession of Faith," QR, II (October, 1891), 371. Cf. RT, June 17, 1891, p. 369.

[3] I. L. Kephart, "Go Slow--Hold On to the Bible," RT, July 21, 1897, pp. 899-900; D. Berger, "The Higher Criticism," RT, February 22, 1899, pp. 231-32; Hervin U. Roop, "Is the 'Higher Criticism' of the Bible Unanimous and Final?" RT, September 26, 1906, pp. 1224-25.

[4] GCJUB, 1901, p. 22.

of higher criticism moved to a more aggressive pattern of attack and even further, to a settled plan of defense for the Holy Scriptures.

Liberal Attitudes Toward the Bible

Although they were a minority, some voices called for more openness to the insights into the Bible provided by higher criticism. Their arguments were of five distinct kinds: 1) the contention that not all criticism is destructive; 2) the accusation that their hyper-conservative opponents had used their opposition to higher criticism to display their orthodoxy; 3) the plea for tolerance and openness to truth; 4) attempts to harmonize the Bible with the immanental doctrines of liberalism; and 5) an inquiry into the nature of revelation.

Criticism Not All Destructive

One of the earliest apologists for higher criticism among United Brethren was the Rev. L. F. John, graduate of Yale Divinity School and sometime pastor of the Lebanon Valley College church. In 1893 he wrote one of the only four articles favorable to higher criticism that ever appeared in the Telescope until after the mid-twenties. In his attempt to show that they were not essentially rationalistic or destructive, John divided higher critics into classes. One group deserves condemnation for its materialism and rationalism. But of the others all honest men must admit that "there can be no more humble, unassuming class of searchers after truth. They are ardent lovers of the Bible, and sincerely evangelical in belief and practice."[1] An even more prominent leader, Editor Etter of the Quarterly Review, noted that Charles Briggs (of Union Theological Seminary fame) ranked himself among constructive higher critics; Etter accepted his

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[1]L. F. John, "The Higher Criticism," RT, November 8, 1893, p. 708.

qualifying adjective as valid.[1] A later editor of the Review could even give an appreciative memorial sketch of William Rainey Harper, a Biblical scholar whom conservatives in the church fervently despised.[2] Another United Brethren leader, Bishop J. S. Mills (1893-1909), also showed appreciation for higher criticism. His biographer noted that Mills made a clear distinction between constructive and destructive criticism.[3]

United Evangelicals were usually adamant in their resistance to higher criticism, but a few voices admitted that it was not entirely destructive. The Rev. J. Q. A. Curry, a frequent contributor to the church press and about as conservative as any other leader in the denomination, recognized that this distinction had to be made. "It is unfair," he wrote, "to class all 'higher critics' as opponents of the Bible, as we have it in the accepted versions."[4] The final editor of The Evangelical before its dissolution at the time of the church union of Evangelicals in 1922, Ammon E. Hangen, was quite hospitable to higher criticism and could affirm that "constructive criticism has served to deepen our appreciation of the Bible."[5]

In the Evangelical Association the bishops made a distinction between destructive and constructive criticism in their episcopal messages to

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[1]J. W. Etter, Review of The Higher Criticism of the Hexateuch, by Charles Briggs, QR, IV (October, 1893), 376-377.

[2]H. A. Thompson, "William Rainey Harper," QR, XVII (March-April, 1906), 119-121.

[3]Funk, pp. 147-48.

[4]J. Q. A. Curry, "The Battle of the Book," TE, April 3, 1918, pp. 4-5. An article by Bishop Merrill of the Methodist Church reprinted in The Evangelical offers the judgment that "those among us who denounce all that is known as the 'higher criticism' as destructive, infidel, and of the evil one, are too inconsiderate and rash to be permanently influential" ("Bishop Merrill on the Bible," TE, June 13, 1906, pp. 369, 377).

[5]A. E. Hangen, "Do We Need a New Bible?" TE, November 22, 1921, p. 5.

several of the General Conferences and later to the General Conference of the reunited Evangelical Church. Refraining from using the term "higher criticism," the bishops welcomed constructive scholarship of the Bible and deplored "destructive criticism."[1] They may well have learned to make this distinction from S. J. Gamertsfelder, brother-in-law of Bishop S. P. Spreng.[2]

Unworthy Reasons for Opposing Higher Criticism

A less important argument--but an interesting and revealing one--was the accusation that some ambitious persons had almost made a career out of opposing higher criticism of the Bible. In an unusual article the Rev. H. H. Thoren, United Evangelical leader in Illinois, pointed out that the name "higher criticism" had unduly frightened some people. The result has been that "the honest efforts in Biblical study and investigation, in matters belonging to the four walls of the college and not to the pulpit in general have suffered under the tendency to overestimate the worth and underestimate the significance of the publicity of yet undecided and unproven conclusions." In fact, says Thoren, "the feverish condition in church circles is due to the fact that some pokenose tries to gain favor by an effort to laud his orthodoxy, in decrying the notes of errors of others in stating truths."[3] To write such words in the United Evangelical Church in 1899 was either courageous or foolhardy.

Dr. J. W. Etter, the United Brethren leader, held similar views. In the furor that arose over Charles Briggs' inaugural address Etter became convinced that the alleged heterodoxy of his views had been exaggerated by

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[1] GCJEA, 1919, p. 22; GCJEA, 1922, p. 50; General Conference Journal of the Evangelical Church, 1926, pp. 91-92.

[2] Gamertsfelder, Systematic Theology, p. 77.

[3] H. H. Thoren, "Heresy Agitations," TE, June 6, 1899, p. 178.

his opponents. He confessed that he did not accept all of Briggs' views, but he was certain that they "are not to be met by denunciation or trials for heresy, but by a scholarship broader and more profound, by arguments sounder, than theirs, and by a criticism as exhaustive and thorough, which shall carry conviction because based on correct principles and methods."[1] In fact, Etter was willing to assert that "Dr. Briggs is deeply reverent and devout in his attitude toward the word of God, and that he is conscientiously and earnestly aiming at its exaltation."[2]

The Plea for Greater Tolerance

A third phase of the more liberal attitude was the plea for greater tolerance. To some persons it seemed inconceivable that the Christian should be afraid to be honest and fair. One United Evangelical minister confessed that what he craved for "in the realm of Christian scholarship" was "fairness to both sides of any controversy, of any critical question, ambition enough on the part of every student to weigh the evidence, and boldness to say what is what when the work is done, the columns are added, and the totals are known," even if one is compelled by the strongest evidence to decide "that there were two Isaiahs."[3]

A few men in the Evangelical Association expressed similar views. G. J. Kirn was probably the most forthright in his call for openness to truth: "If our views are wrong, we want to be honest enough to be corrected."[4]

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[1] J. W. Etter, Review of The Bible, The Church, and the Reason, by Charles A. Briggs, QR, III (October, 1892), 380.

[2] Ibid.

[3] M. L. Burger, "Intensive, Extensive, and Critical Thinking," TE, October 17, 1917, p. 7. Burger was a graduate of Drew Theological Seminary (TE, May 28, 1913, p. 22).

[4] G. J. Kirn, "How to Study the Bible," EM, October 3, 1893, p. 625.

Kirn frankly stated his conviction that

> theological conceptions expand as the soul expands, but the relation of the soul to God is forever the same. . . .
>
> I do not wish to agree to the results of modern criticism, but I am in perfect sympathy with the spirit of a conscientious criticism. I am convinced that Christ is a rock, and if criticism succeeds in clearing away much of the rubbish tradition has heaped upon it, it will only be to bring out His true nature and beauty more prominently. Criticism can never shatter the rock.[1]

To condemn all forms of critical Bible study, wrote J. B. Kanaga, is to betray one's "intellectual stagnation" and fear of the truth. The Christian minister cannot afford to ignore the findings of the scholars.[2]

The best example of this spirit among United Brethren was J. W. Etter, first editor of the Quarterly Review and professor of theology at Union Biblical Seminary for several years before his premature death in 1895. In a review of Washington Gladden's Who Wrote the Bible? Etter advised the reader that despite his disagreement with Gladden "no harm can come to Christianity by a study of all such questions and the acceptance of such conclusions of the Higher Criticism as by the general consensus of scholars are considered to be established."[3] In a later article Etter ably set forth in more orderly fashion his point of view:

> 1. We should neither hastily denounce the conclusions nor readily accept the bold announcements of the higher critics, but suspend judgment until something more satisfactory has been reached. Because an opinion originated with a skeptical school, is, in itself, no reason why we should accept or reject it. Nothing can be more rash than to

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[1] G. J. Kirn, "Man His Own Prophet," EM, October 15, 1902, pp. 657-58.

[2] J. B. Kanaga, "Present Status of Biblical Criticism," EM, September 30, 1896, p. 625. See S. J. Gamertsfelder, "Tendencies of Modern Theological Scholarship," EM, September 7, 1904, p. 561. In his Systematic Theology Gamertsfelder wrote: "The thorough student will weigh very carefully all arguments in favor of any new theory of revelation, and yet not be dogmatically unwilling to abandon old and worn-out views of inspiration and interpretation" (p. 11).

[3] J. W. Etter, Review of Who Wrote the Bible? by Washington Gladden, QR, II (October, 1891), 381.

> say, "If this proves true we must surrender the whole truth of the Bible." The past history of the church shows how often she had to recede from such hasty opinions when alarmed by hostile attacks. We have found that Genesis and geology harmonize, that theistic evolution and the Bible are not irreconcilable, and we have often seen how the church has weakened her position before the world by her timidity about these matters. . . . New doctrines, however adverse to traditional beliefs, must be met by free discussion, and refuted by scholarship and argument. It is too late in the world's history to vote opinions either up or down, or to settle questions of fact by majorities. The church may, if so disposed, rid herself of all the critics by the process of discipline and heresy trial; it may cast out all original investigators and independent students, but this would be to sound its own death knell and bury itself in the darkness of the Middle Ages.[1]

These advocates of tolerance for higher critics were confident that if a person's Christian experience were "enriching, purifying, ennobling and conquering," he need not fear what honest Biblical criticism might teach him; it could not disturb his faith.[2] This was the assurance of Professor E. E. Domm, who taught Bible and Religious Education at North-Western College for more than thirty years. His objective, he wrote, was "the building up of the spiritual life of our students." He was convinced that if he was successful, their acquaintance with "the most assured findings of modern scholarship" would not disturb their faith.[3]

What some were beginning to believe was that the authorship of a particular book of the Bible was hardly a sufficiently important matter over which to lose one's faith. As one commentator put it:

> Let every book in the Bible be composite, if you choose. Change all the dates which can be changed with any show of reason. Make the final

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[1] J. W. Etter, "The Higher Criticism," QR, V (April, 1894), 115. Also see John H. Vincent, "Biblical Criticism," QR, X (April, 1899), 164; Bishop S. M. Merrill, "About 'Higher Criticism,'" QR, XIII (September-October, 1902), 290-95; "The Higher Criticism," RT, May 13, 1891, pp. 289-290; "Bishop Merrill on the Bible," TE, June 13, 1906, pp. 369, 377.

[2] H. H. Thoren, "Heresy Agitations," TE, June 13, 1899, p. 186.

[3] E. E. Domm, "Bible and Religious Education at North-Western College," EM, January 30, 1922, p. 6.

> redaction of the Pentateuch as late as you please. Place Amos just before the exile, and make all the Psalms post-exilic. What then? It does not follow by any inevitable consequence that the Bible is discredited and must be discarded by the lover of truth.[1]

What is important is not who wrote the latter part of the book of Isaiah,

> but that religious truth which we have tested in our souls. That is the revelation by which we find God, and that is life by which we are born again. The proof of inspiration is not an external evidence of physical wonder, but in the appealing power of vital truth that makes doubt dumb, and by the waysides of the world we learn, as did the woman of Samaria, that neither the sacred mountain nor the holy city, but the spirit of man and the spirit of God, are the final sanctities.[2]

An Alternative to Supernaturalism

A fourth kind of argument employed by those who wanted a more liberal approach to the Bible was a frank attempt to harmonize the Scriptures with contemporary immanental theories. Only two such efforts appear in denominational literature. One of these is nothing more than an isolated article written by a student at the University of Chicago. Presumably she was United Brethren, but her name never again appears. The article analyzed the religious ideas of Isaiah 40-66 and presupposed the late authorship of this section. The concluding paragraph exhibits the liberal conceptions of the writer: "According to the view presented, Isaiah did not, in this or in other teachings, advance religious conceptions which are inexplicable, except when regarded as special revelations, but ideas which were the natural outgrowth of the already existing religious conceptions of his people, as they were changed and readjusted to fit the new circumstances and solve the

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[1] Rev. Newton M. Hall, "The Critical Study of the Bible," QR, XIII (November-December, 1902), 358.

[2] Hervin U. Roop, "Bible and Modern Man," RT, May 3, 1919, pp. 6-7. Cf. "Bishop Merrill on the Bible," TE, June 13, 1906, pp. 369, 377; M. L. Burger, "Intensive, Extensive, and Critical Thinking," TE, October 17, 1917, p. 7; Robert S. MacArthur, "Some Religious Outlooks on the Twentieth Century," QR, XII (July, 1901), 259-60.

problems which the peculiar situation forced upon them."[1]

The other such attempt was by Dean G. J. Kirn of North-Western College. Kirn was friendly to higher criticism and was interested in harmonizing the Bible with evolution, which he called just "another term for growth."[2] His desire to avoid traditional supernaturalism is evident in his application of developmental theory to the rise of Hebrew religion. Perhaps he was no more radical than some others in the denomination, but only understood the implications of his views better than they did.

Reconsideration of the Nature of Revelation

The fifth aspect of the more liberal approach to the Bible was a re-evaluation of the nature of revelation. This took many forms. One of these was the view that revelation should be conceived as historical. On one occasion this view reached many United Evangelicals at one time through a lecture given by Olin Curtis of Drew Theological Seminary at the Perkasie Park Bible Conference.[3] A few leaders also may have felt the influence of W. Robertson Smith, who was as important as any other figure in the English-speaking world in introducing and domesticating the idea of the historical nature of revelation.[4] Bishop E. B. Kephart, the United Brethren leader, reveals at least a partial acceptance of this viewpoint in his Apologetics.[5]

The acceptance of the historical nature of revelation led to the

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[1]Mary Louise Marot, "The Religious Conceptions of the Author of Isaiah 40-66," QR, VI (July, 1895), 230.

[2]G. J. Kirn, "The Inspiration of the Old Testament," EM, May 28, 1902, p. 337.

[3]See Edward Haines Kistler's report on Curtis's lecture, "The Authority and Inspiration of the Bible" (TE, August 2, 1905, p. 492).

[4]Glover, pp. 122ff. [5]E. B. Kephart, Apologetics, p. 9.

belief that revelation was by nature progressive.[1] Some regarded the idea of progressive revelation as a commendable feature of the "New Theology."[2] Others were very careful to limit the principle of progressiveness to revelation within the Bible.[3] Gamertsfelder admitted the progressive nature of revelation in the Old Testament, but affirmed that it was now completed in Jesus Christ.[4] It was a doctrine that made its way into at least two books which the Evangelical Church used for religious instruction.[5]

People whom evangelical liberalism influenced gradually came to accept the view that revelation was not simply historical--for this could imply little more than that revelation was a body of truths handed down over a period of time--but that it was a process in which "the accumulated insights derived from religious experience are progressively purified."[6] This view of revelation is very clear in the writings of S. J. Gamertsfelder. Although he usually gave revelation an intellectualistic interpretation, he repeatedly said in various ways that religious experience is the foundation for Christian doctrine.[7] A United Brethren minister, the Rev.

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[1]Willis Glover asserts that it was these new understandings that prepared the way for the acceptance of higher criticism by British Baptists, Congregationalists, Methodists, and Presbyterians (p. 105).

[2]Rev. I. H. Albright, "The Old Theology and the New," QR, XIV (January-February, 1903), 24.

[3]Rev. J. W. Domer, "The Progressive Nature of Revelation," TE, July 28 and August 4, 1897, pp. 234, 242.

[4]S. J. Gamertsfelder, "A Completed Revelation," EM, June 14, 1905, pp. 369-70. Cf. W. H. Bucks, "The Supreme Test of Christian Doctrine," EM, April 9, 1919, pp. 3-4.

[5]E. W. Praetorius et al., Handbook of Religion (Cleveland, Ohio: Evangelical Publishing House, 1928), p. 68; Samuel P. Spreng, What Evangelicals Believe, p. 34.

[6]Cauthen, pp. 24-25.

[7]S. J. Gamertsfelder, "Doctrine and Religious Life," EM, January 31, 1906, p. 6; S. J. Gamertsfelder, "Theology Related to Religion," EM,

B. F. Fritz, expressed this view, also, openly admitting the influence of Borden Parker Bowne upon him. "Our belief in the existence of a personal God," he wrote, "rests, then, in the awakened consciousness of self as a personality, through which man comprehends and apprehends the personality of a personal God."[1]

If revelation were to be understood in terms of religious experience, there was no logical impediment to extending the scope of revelation far beyond Christian Scripture. Several may have realized this, but only G. J. Kirn was willing to put into writing the admission that "the penitential Psalms of the Akkadians and ancient Babylonians are of a high order."[2] According to Kirn, God could not allow his truth to be limited by restricting it to the words and phrases of a single language and culture.

The inevitable result of defining revelation in terms of human experience was to distinguish between revelation and the record of revelation. "Revelations are made by God, while records of revelations are made by human beings inspired by the Spirit of God. . . . It was what God did for Abraham rather than what He said to him that developed the life and character of this friend of God."[3] Bishop J. S. Mills was telling United Brethren that the Bible was not the "essence of Christianity," but only "the record of a revelation from God." Christianity had "existed before there

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October 15, 1913, p. 6; Gamertsfelder, Systematic Theology, pp. 8, 38-39, 87-88, 130. Cf. G. J. Kirn, "Man His Own Prophet," EM, October 15, 1902, pp. 657-58.

[1]B. F. Fritz, "The Being of God," QR, VIII (October, 1897), 319-320.

[2]G. J. Kirn, "The Word of God," EM, April 2, 1902, p. 209.

[3]Gamertsfelder, Systematic Theology, pp. 22-23.

was any written record of its beginnings."[1] From this view I. L. Kephart drew the conclusion that not everything in the Bible is revelation. One should hardly classify the historical and geographical truths of the Bible as revelation, argued Kephart.[2] The proposed Plan of Union for United Brethren, the Reformed Church in the United States, and the Evangelical Synod of North America, in holding that the Word of God is "contained" in Scriptures and "verified by the testimony of the Holy Spirit in our hearts," was an attempt to include this newer understanding of revelation.[3]

Liberals saw that this new way of understanding revelation had implications for one's doctrine of the Bible's inspiration. One of the first to recognize this was the editor of the Quarterly Review.

> The suggestions of the ipsissima verba to the minds of the inspired writers is incompatible with their free action as evinced in the varieties and even blemishes of style. Words, as such, are incapable of inspiration. They are either oral, consisting of certain sounds, or written signs consisting of certain marks on paper, both material signs of which a spiritual element cannot properly be predicated. Even if verbal inspiration is claimed for the original phraseology in order to be divine truth, then there should be a like inspiration in all translations of the Scriptures in order to render it divine, or stamp it with verbal inspiration.[4]

J. W. Etter's understanding of inspiration resembles that of Bishop E. B. Kephart, and he probably played a part in shaping the ideas of the bishop. Both seemed to hold the "dynamic" theory of inspiration, although Kephart was reluctant to identify his position with only one view of inspiration.

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[1]J. S. Mills, "The Essence of Christianity," QR, VI (January, 1895), 39.

[2]I. L. Kephart, "Infallibility, Inspiration, and Revelation," RT, June 7, 1899, pp. 707-708. Although Editor Bucks of the Messenger supported the Billy Sunday revival campaigns, he did not agree with his literalistic approach to the Jonah story (W. H. Bucks, "Old-Fashioned Theology," EM, February 17, 1915, pp. 4-5).

[3]"Proposed Plan of Union," RT, March 9, 1929, pp. 6-7.

[4]J. W. Etter, "Our New Theology," QR, I (January, 1890), 93-94.

He offered this definition of inspiration:

> The Holy Spirit so moving, influencing, controlling, and using the sacred writers as to make them his mediums through which to give a written revelation of his will to man of the plan of salvation, the ideas communicated being inspired, true in point of fact, but the writers being left free to clothe those ideas in their own language, but so restricted by the Holy Spirit in the use of language as not to use words that would misrepresent those ideas.[1]

In rejecting a theory of verbal inspiration S. J. Gamertsfelder of the Evangelical Association openly avows his preference for the "dynamic theory," although he states it in his own way so as to include aspects of other theories.[2] His brother-in-law, Bishop S. P. Spreng, espoused the same theory of Biblical inspiration in a series of lectures he delivered at Evangelical Theological Seminary in 1916.[3]

United Evangelicals remained more conservative. One prominent minister affirmed that salvation does not depend upon one's acceptance of "the verbal inspiration theory respecting the Bible."[4] The only other evidence that United Evangelicals took seriously any liberal theory of inspiration is the isolated and unexplainable appearance in The Evangelical of an article by Bishop Merrill of the Methodist Episcopal Church in which he asserts that

> the modification of a theory of inspiration does not necessarily destroy the inspiration. If men once thought that God used inspired men as men use the pen with which they write, dictating words and syllables, at once employing and overriding human agency, and then

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[1] E. B. Kephart, Apologetics, pp. 48-49. Cf. Etter's inaugural address given at the opening of the fall term of Union Biblical Seminary in 1891 ("The Christocentric Idea in Theology," QR, III [January, 1892], 1-21).

[2] Gamertsfelder, Systematic Theology, pp. 108-110; S. J. Gamertsfelder, "The Inspiration of the Bible," EM, November 2, 1898, p. 689.

[3] EM, March 1, 1916, p. 10.

[4] D. B. Byers, "The Proper Relation of Faith to Creeds," TE, September 5, 1894, p. 281.

> subsequently discovered that he inspired the man and not the pen, and used his mind and heart as well as his hand, their idea of inspiration will undergo some change; but the fact of inspiration is not affected nor its importance diminished. Instead of loss there is real gain in the nearer approach to the correct apprehension of the fact.[1]

Even Ammon E. Hangen, the more liberal editor of The Evangelical (more liberal than his predecessor, H. B. Hartzler), sided with Clarence Macartney in the controversy that followed Fosdick's sermon, "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?"[2] Hangen did seem relieved, however, that Macartney repudiated a dictation theory of inspiration which Fosdick had attributed to fundamentalists.[3]

This gradual and sometimes almost grudging shift in understanding the nature of revelation led at least a few leaders to think of the Bible as both a divine and a human book. J. B. Kanaga of the Evangelical Association was willing to approve of the Methodist Bishop Tigert's comment that "with the advance of biblical criticism and the diffusion of intelligence has come a settled recognition of the fact that the Bible is no less divine because human, and no less human because Divine."[4]

Conclusion

Although most men rejected higher criticism and sought for ways of defending against the threat it posed, a few became convinced that they must come to terms with the new techniques for Biblical study that it

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[1] "Bishop Merrill on the Bible," TE, June 13, 1906, pp. 369, 377. W. M. Stanford was editor at the time this appeared.

[2] Infra, p. 354.

[3] A. E. Hangen, "'Bring Me the Book,'" TE, August 1, 1922, pp. 1, 4.

[4] J. B. Kanaga, "Present Status of Biblical Criticism," EM, October 14, 1896, p. 657. Cf. J. W. Etter, "The Higher Criticism," QR, V (April, 1894), 110-120.

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[4] J. B. Kanaga, "Present Status of Biblical Criticism," EM, October 14, 1896, p. 657. Cf. J. W. Etter, "The Higher Criticism," QR, V (April, 1894), 110-120.

provided. They constituted a minority, but they wielded an influence that far outweighed their numbers because of their location in such centers of influence as theological seminaries. With the death of William Jennings Bryan in 1925 and Emeritus Bishop Weekley and Editor J. M. Phillippi in 1926, conservative influences waned in strength among United Brethren. The reunion of the two groups of Evangelicals in 1922 produced a similar result, at least for the former United Evangelicals. The influence of Moody Bible Institute diminished now that United Evangelicals (as Evangelicals again) had a theological seminary of their own to support and to which they could send their ministerial students. This seminary, moreover, was one that for a long time was to feel the influence of S. J. Gamertsfelder, a man open to new trends in Biblical scholarship.

XIII. A FUNDAMENTALIST POSTURE

The Rise of a Movement

In the closing decades of the nineteenth century the movement in American Protestantism known as fundamentalism began to take its rise. It was the product of a mentality that saw Protestantism threatened by the intellectual and theological Zeitgeist. Social, economic and ecclesiastical factors contributed to its sense of estrangement and loneliness.[1] As "modernism" and higher criticism extended their influence, the fundamentalist became militant and increasingly anti-intellectual in his defense of the inerrant Scriptures. Convinced of the danger to Protestantism, he set to work to undercut the power and influence of modernists in the major denominations. Although it lacked effective national coordination and organization, fundamentalism assumed the proportions of a crusade and was able to enlist support from conservatives of many stripes, ranging from the simple pietist to a theologian of such stature as John Gresham Machen of Princeton Theological Seminary.[2] This it was able to do because at many points its

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[1]Paul A. Carter, The Decline and Revival of the Social Gospel: Social and Political Liberalism in American Protestant Churches, 1920-1940 (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1954), chap. iv.

[2]According to Daniel B. Stevick, these four strains of American conservatives united under the banner of fundamentalism: Evangelicalism, Puritanism, Revivalism, and the Plymouth Brethren (Beyond Fundamentalism [Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1964], pp. 29-30). Smith, Handy, Loetscher see two principal components of the fundamentalist movement: "Pietism" and "scholasticism" (II, 312). Norman H. Maring also notes the heterogeneous character of the fundamentalist movement in "A New Look at Fundamentalism," Foundations, I (October, 1958), 82-88, and in his chapter, "Conservative but Progressive," in What God Hath Wrought, ed. G. L. Guffin (Philadelphia, 1960), 17-28.

concerns were almost indistinguishable from those of the mainstream of American Protestantism. The energies of fundamentalists and their allies flowed out into a variety of organizations: Bryan Bible League, Winrod's Flying Defenders, Bible Crusaders of America, Anti-Evolution League, School-Bag Gospel League, Victorious Life Testimony, Methodist League for Faith and Life, and many others.[1] Disenchantment with the crusade had set in by 1930, however, fracturing it into a number of conservative groups. One segment moved in the direction of theologically responsible conservatism and is represented in Protestantism today by such men as E. J. Carnell and Carl F. H. Henry.[2] Another sizable group, whose pietism drew them into the fundamentalist crusade when orthodoxy seemed threatened, simply ignored the movement when its militancy and schismatic tendencies became offensive. This group included the bulk of Evangelicals and United Brethren. The only true fundamentalists after the crusade had subsided were the people who eventually organized themselves into the American Council of Christian Churches, led by Carl McIntire.[3]

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[1]Norman F. Furniss, The Fundamentalist Controversy, 1918-1931 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), pp. 54-153. Stewart G. Cole's The History of Fundamentalism (New York: Richard R. Smith, Inc., 1931) is the earliest full-length treatment of the movement.

[2]See Carnell's critical essay on "Fundamentalism" in A Handbook of Christian Theology, ed. Marvin Halverson (New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1958), pp. 142-144.

[3]Louis Gasper tells the story of fundamentalism since 1930 in terms of the activities of the American Council of Christian Churches and the National Association of Evangelicals in The Fundamentalist Movement (The Hague: Mouton and Co., 1963). He refers to both groups as "fundamentalists." For my purposes and according to my definitions, I consider only the former group true fundamentalists, for they alone are anti-intellectual, militantly reactionary, and exclusivist. Cf. Sydney E. Ahlstrom, "Continental Influence on American Christian Thought since World War I," Church History, XXVII (September, 1958), 256-272, especially p. 257. William Hordern defines fundamentalism more broadly, using the term as synonymous with conservative Protestantism (A Layman's Guide to Protestant Theology [New York: The Macmillan Company, 1957], chap. iii).

The "vanguard of the . . . fundamentalist movement" was modern dispensationalism,[1] whose origin Norman Kraus traces to the teachings of J. N. Darby, the English founder of the Plymouth Brethren movement. Dedicated to a literalistic approach to the Bible, dispensationalism avoided the problem of contradictions within the Scriptures by dividing up the Biblical material into different dispensations.[2] It extended its influence by infiltrating the rising premillennial movement in America.[3] Burgeoning premillennial sentiment had become visible in several Bible conferences, the most notable of which was a nondenominational Prophetic Conference held in Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, New York, in 1878.[4] Historic, traditional premillennialism, although refusing to equate Kingdom of God and Church (as did postmillennialism), had not utterly separated them.[5] However, under the influence of dispensationalism, premillennialists began to think of the church as that spiritual group of elect individuals gathered out of the world by God to receive his choice blessings in this world and the next. For the dispensationalist there was no correlation between this group and organized Christendom. In fact, this invisible fellowship of saints must

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[1]C. Norman Kraus, Dispensationalism in America, Its Rise and Development (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1958), p. 7.

[2]Ibid., p. 9.

[3]Premillennialism is the view that Christ will return personally to earth from heaven, at which time the millennium or Golden Age of his totally beneficent and blissful reign will begin. This is to be contrasted with the postmillennial view that holds that we are presently living in the millennium--or it will soon begin--at the conclusion of which Christ will return. Postmillennialists tend not to interpret the return of Christ as literally or personally as premillennialists. These two views differ markedly in their conception of the work of the church--and in their verdict on the present age, premillennialists being far more pessimistic and apocalyptic in spirit.

[4]Smith, Handy, Loetscher, II, 314-15. [5]Kraus, pp. 105-106.

separate from existing denominations. This ecclesiology provided the basis for the various separatistic agencies of fundamentalism: "the faith mission, the Bible conference, the Bible church, the withdrawals from apostate denominations, and the interdenominational fundamentalist college."[1] The Bible conference movement around the turn of the century provided the most significant impetus and vehicle for transforming fundamentalist sentiment into the proportions of a crusade. In fact, the 1895 session of the Niagara Bible Conference was the one that formulated the famous "five points of fundamentalism," which became the platform of the movement: the inerrancy of Scripture, the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, the substitutionary theory of the atonement, the physical resurrection of Christ, and his imminent bodily return to earth.[2] Stimulated and strengthened by the circulation of nearly three million copies of Lyman and Milton Stewart's The Fundamentals and by the organization of the World's Christian Fundamentals Association in 1919, the movement reached its peak in the mid-twenties with the famous Scopes anti-evolution trial.

Many Evangelicals and United Brethren quite naturally approved of the fundamentalist crusade and supported it because of their denominational tradition of defensiveness in theology. A few leaders had begun to recognize the transient nature of theological language and to contend that it should perennially give way to linguistic forms more adequately expressing theological convictions for a new cultural and historical situation. The

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[1]Ernest R. Sandeen, Review of Dispensationalism in America, Its Rise and Development, by C. Norman Kraus, Church History, XXIX (March, 1960), 111-13.

[2]Olmstead, p. 474. Although these five points have achieved considerable notoriety, they by no means represented the beliefs of all groups that became a part of the fundamentalist crusade.

majority in both denominations, however, remained committed to an approach to theology which viewed the theologian's task as the development and defense of eternally true propositions. Therefore, the mood of fundamentalism quite understandably attracted Evangelicals and United Brethren. Many of them joined with other conservatives who were cooperating to combat the serious threat presented by the "New Theology." Denominational traditions and the external threat of modernism combined to fix upon both denominations a basically fundamentalist posture as they entered the twenties.

Men who strongly opposed liberal trends in theology soon assumed the role of honored guardians of the faith. This is not surprising since prominent voices among Evangelicals were suggesting strongly that the very reason for the continuance of their denomination was the need for it to be a guardian of orthodoxy.[1] Such men as Jacob Hartzler and Bishop Rudolph Dubs of the United Evangelicals, Bishop Thomas Bowman of the Evangelical Association, and Bishop Weekley of the United Brethren were revered as the sentinels of orthodoxy.[2]

As the fundamentalist crusade rose in intensity, the editors of the denominational periodicals viewed the defense of the faith as their special responsibility. H. B. Hartzler of the United Evangelicals, S. P. Spreng

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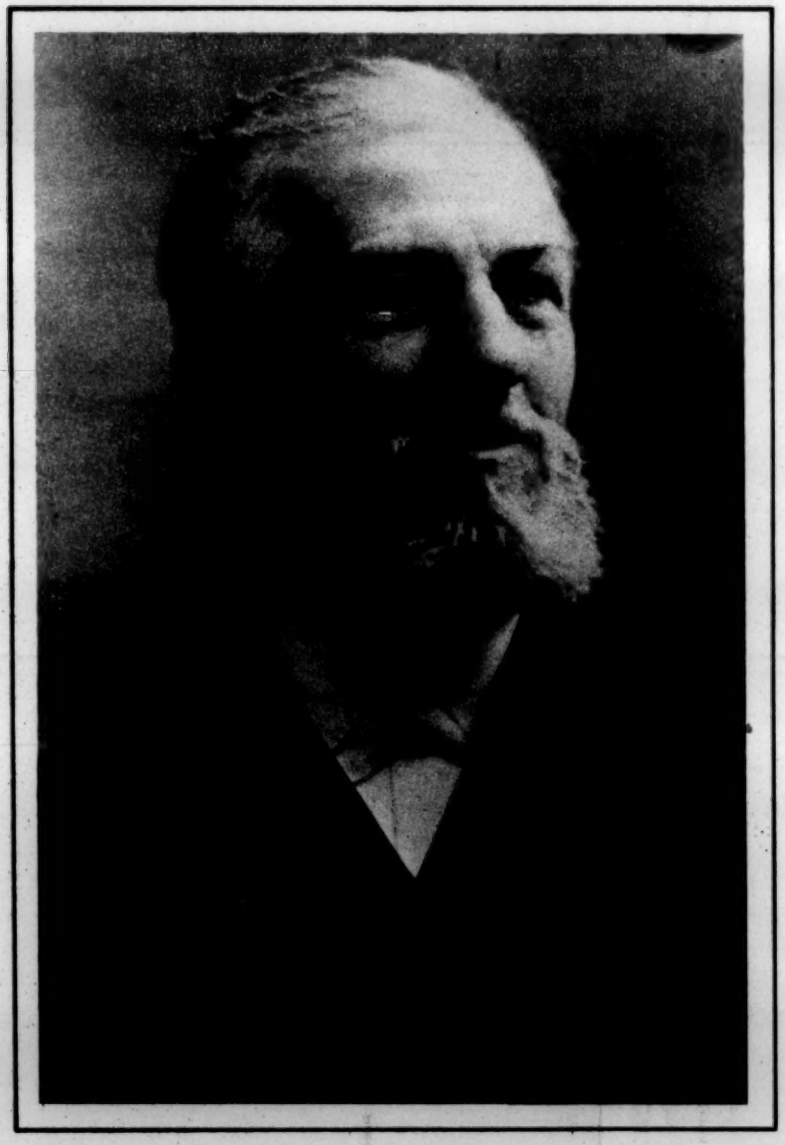
[1]See Episcopal Message to United Evangelical General Conference in TE, October 16, 1918, p. 20. Also see F. M. Lehman, "The Evangelical Association," EM, January 17, 1900, p. 34.

[2]Rudolph Dubs, "Rev. Jacob Hartzler," TE, February 28, 1906, p. 129; a report from Central Pennsylvania Bible Conference on Dubs' lectures on the New Theology (TE, August 14, 1912, p. 516); W. M. Stanford, "Address at the Funeral of Rev. Jacob Hartzler," TE, January 19, 1916, pp. 8-9; Bishop Bowman's address to the 1915 General Conference of the Evangelical Association (GCJEA, 1915, p. 10); Spreng's sermon at the funeral of Bishop Bowman (EM, April 2, 1923, pp. 6-8); J. M. Phillippi, "Poisoning Minds," RT, February 24, 1923, p. 3.



H. B. HARTZLER

(Courtesy of Evangelical Theological Seminary, Naperville, Illinois)

and W. H. Bucks of the Evangelical Association, and J. M. Phillippi of the United Brethren all were real warhorses for the faith. Not only did they select many articles which breathed fire and smoke in defense of the faith, but they all wrote frequent editorials in the same mood.[1] Hartzler was willing to say "that we would rather see son and daughter of ours die an early death, with unshaken faith in the Bible and the Christ of the Bible, and lay them away in God's acre, than to submit them to . . . faith-destroying teachings . . . concerning the dear old Book which has been the light and joy of their parental home, and on which their father and mother will pillow their gray heads in the dying hour."[2]

All these editors kept a close watch on developments in other denominations and rejoiced when "modernism" received a setback. Hartzler praised the Presbyterian General Assembly when it tightened regulations on the orthodoxy of theological students.[3] Spreng commended the Presbyterians for

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[1]Buechler, Work and Position of W. H. Bucks, chap. ii; a sarcastic editorial note on the New Theology by Hartzler in TE, June 21, 1911, p. 385; Hartzler's editorial reference to "the New Theology simpletons" (TE, January 26, 1916, p. 3); H. B. Hartzler, "Our Church Doctrines," TE, August 27, 1919, p. 6; H. B. Hartzler, "'The Foolishness of Fools,'" TE, February 25, 1920, p. 7; H. B. Hartzler, "The Preacher and His Message," TE, September 8, 1920, p. 7; tributes to H. B. Hartzler (TE, September 15, 1920, pp. 4-5, 8-15); S. P. Spreng, "Modern Apologetics," EM, October 17, 1893, pp. 664-65; S. P. Spreng, "The Modern Schools of Theology," EM, June 27, 1906, p. 4; S. P. Spreng, "Our Attitude Toward the New Theology," EM, April 17, 1907, p. 5; W. H. Bucks, "Is the Sense of Sin Among Men Diminishing?" EM, December 24, 1913, p. 2; W. H. Bucks, "The Advanced Thought of the Age," EM, January 21, 1914, p. 4; W. H. Bucks, "Doctrinal Agitations," EM, December 15, 1915, p. 4; J. M. Phillippi, "The Modernist Fundamental," RT, January 5, 1924, pp. 3-4; J. M. Phillippi, "No Middle Ground," RT, July 30, 1921, pp. 3-4, together with a front-page cartoon contrasting "Evangelical Faith and Modernist Belief;" W. H. Washinger, "Dr. J. M. Phillippi--An Appreciation," RT, October 23, 1926, p. 5.

[2]H. B. Hartzler, "Bad Business for a Preacher," TE, January 17, 1917, pp. 6-7.

[3]TE, July 7, 1915, p. 2; cf. Henry W. Adams, "Our Insidious Foe and Our Refuge," TE, August 23, 1916, p. 9.

their actions against Charles Briggs and Preserved Smith in the 1890's.[1] Presbyterians again received an accolade when they elected Clarence Macartney as moderator of the General Assembly and when they forced Harry Emerson Fosdick to resign his position as guest minister of New York's First Presbyterian Church.[2] Phillippi applauded the Baptists when they appointed a committee to study the orthodoxy of teaching on foreign mission fields--and the Episcopalians when they ushered the Rev. Percy Stickney Grant out of their ranks.[3] Writers in the church press and authors of books published by Evangelicals and United Brethren could count on a large and receptive reading public if they engaged in some form of attack on modernism.[4]

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[1] S. P. Spreng, "Briggs and the Bible," EM, June 26, 1894, p. 402.

[2] "The Trend of Current Religious Thought," EM, June 14, 1924, pp. 2-3; J. M. Phillippi, "Bewildered Modernism," RT, July 5, 1924, p. 3.

[3] Ibid.

[4] H. Paul Douglass, Church Unity Movements in the United States, pp. 134-35; Rev. G. W. Imboden, "The Higher Criticism," TE, June 17, 1896, pp. 193-94; Charles C. Cook, Review of The Inside of the Cup, by Winston Churchill, TE, March 25, 1914, pp. 6-8; J. Arthur Heck's report on Dr. George W. Richards' lecture at Perkasie Park Bible Conference on "Modernism and Liberalism," TE, July 26, 1916, p. 3; Henry W. Adams, "Is the 'Old-Time Religion' Out of Date?" TE, August 16, 1916, p. 9; Charles G. Unangst, "Contending for the Faith," TE, October 4, 1921, p. 13; Charles G. Unangst, "The Old Theology and the New Theology, Contrasted," TE, August 8, 1922, pp. 14-15; Dr. Louis M. Sweet, "Modernism and Some of Its Fallacies," TE, November 21, 1922, p. 7; Dr. Louis M. Sweet, "Modernism and Some of Its Fallacies--Lecture III," TE, November 28, 1922, pp. 10-11; "The Out-Look," in which S. P. Spreng looks forward to much trouble in 1893, predicting rebellion against doctrine and discipline in the church at large (EM, January 3, 1893, p. 8); Rev. Augustus Krecker, "The Signs of Our Times.--II," EM, June 19, 1894, pp. 385-86; the concluding remarks of the Episcopal Message to General Conference of the Evangelical Association (EM, October 9, 1895, pp. 642-44); S. L. Umbach, "Ministerial Education--II," EM, May 20, 1896, pp. 321-22; J. B. Kanaga, "Two Great Works on Systematic Theology," EM, August 3, 1898, p. 281; Rev. Augustus Krecker, "Orthodoxy and the New Theology," EM, September 7, 1898, p. 561; S. P. Spreng, "A 'New Theology' in England," EM, February 27, 1907, p. 5; S. L. Umbach, "The New Theology," EM, April 10, 1907, pp. 6-7; W. H. Bucks, "The Dissolving Nature of Dr. Campbell's Theology," EM, January 20, 1909, p. 3; W. H. Bucks, "Campbell's Latest Production," EM, November 11, 1908, p. 3.

Theological Method and Theological Language

In the battle to defend orthodoxy some recommended a basically anti-intellectual approach. They looked for vital Christian experience and "spirituality" in a minister's life; these were sufficient protection against heterodoxy. "The Holy Spirit is the great Conservator of orthodoxy" became a popular slogan, and it implied a combination of warm-heartedness and concrete evidence of sanctification.[1] The way to meet unbelief was "to forcefully present the simple truths of a pure Christianity with ringing earnestness."[2] The dedicated life was the Christian's best answer

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In the Episcopal Message to the General Conference of the Evangelical Association is a warning against attacks on the faith (EM, October 11, 1911, pp. 4-9). Bishop William Horn, "The Modern Time-Spirit (Zeitgeist)," EM, November 24, 1915, pp. 9-11; Edwin G. Frye, "Church Membership and Doctrinal Tests," EM, June 23, 1920, p. 3; GCJUE, 1910, p. 43; the address of Bishop Rudolph Dubs to the 1897 United Brethren General Conference (GCJUB, 1897, pp. 512-13); Knobel (ed.), p. 38; J. W. Etter's review of his editorial policy in "Parting Words," QR, IV (July, 1893), 286; H. H. Fout, "Bulwarks of the Christian Religion," QR, X (July, 1899), 278-80; Rev. C. I. B. Brane, "The Decline of Faith," QR, XI (January, 1900), 19-21; I. L. Kephart, "'The New Theology,'" RT, April 3, 1907, p. 5; an editorial note derogating the New Theology (RT, September 25, 1907, p. 3); I. L. Kephart, "The New Theology and the Bible," RT, December 11, 1907, p. 3; President Lawrence Keister delivered a baccalaureate sermon entitled "The Rational Vindication of the Christian Faith" (H. H. Shenk, "Lebanon Valley College," RT, June 22, 1910, pp. 17-18); C. H. Wetherbe, "No Compromise," RT, March 8, 1911, pp. 11-12; J. M. Phillippi, "The Serpent's Hiss," RT, August 16, 1911, p. 5; Dr. A. Z. Conrad, "Mistakes of Modernism," RT, July 22, 1922, pp. 5-6; W. Lomax Childress, "The Snare of the Fowler," RT, April 5, 1924, pp. 8-9; A. T. Howard derogates Phillips Brooks' theology in "Corralling Theological Facts," RT, July 24, 1926, pp. 8-9; Bishop A. B. Statton delivered a commencement address entitled "The Trend Toward Modernism" (W. O. Jones, "Kansas City University," RT, July 2, 1927, p. 17); "Doctor Drury's Book," RT, September 17, 1927, p. 9; W. E. Snyder, "A Liberal's Testimony," RT, December 3, 1927, p. 4; W. E. Snyder, "The Other Side," RT, July 21, 1928, pp. 4-5.

[1]See Rudolph Dubs' biographical sketch of the Rev. J. P. Miller in "A Visit to Allentown," TE, December 6, 1905, p. 780; S. P. Spreng, "Rationalism and Ritualism," EM, May 22, 1895, p. 328; "Bishops Address," GCJUE, 1902, p. 44.

[2]C. H. Wetherbe, "How to Meet Unbelief," EM, July 8, 1914, p. 7.

to the unbeliever, and it was the prime guarantee that a man would remain true to the faith.

The more significant development, however, was the growing familiarity with technical theological questions. Theological training in the denominational seminaries and in carefully-prepared home study courses had left its mark. For the first time in either denomination there were numerous men who could understand and discuss difficult theological questions. This is one important reason why so many Evangelicals and United Brethren approved of the fundamentalist crusade, for many of the conservatives who supported it were more theologically-minded than the liberals they opposed.[1] Quite naturally, these two denominations which had only recently acquired proficiency in theological studies gravitated towards those who valued more highly the careful consideration of theological questions. Two convictions undergirded this dedication to theology. The first was the belief that opinions and knowledge provide the basis and stimulus for action. Thought precedes action; "theory is the forerunner of practice."[2] Tolerance is inappropriate in the realm of religion. It is misleading to affirm that one creed is as good as another--that it makes no difference what a man believes so long as he is sincere.[3] "Sterling Christian character and a symmetrical Christian life" can develop only out of "correct doctrinal conceptions."[4] One cannot hope to be effective in service if he is not orthodox and

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[1] Mead, p. 183.

[2] P. O. Rhodes, "Call to Theology," RT, June 22, 1910, pp. 8-9.

[3] Jacob Hartzler, "Hold the Pattern of Sound Words," TE, September 3, 1903, p. 562.

[4] W. H. Bucks, "The Articles of Faith of the Evangelical Association," EM, July 12, 1911, p. 2. Also see W. H. Bucks, "Sound Doctrine," EM, April 1, 1914, pp. 4-5.

scriptural in doctrine.

If ideas were so significant, the cultivation of the mind deserved more attention. Bishop Rudolph Dubs of the United Evangelicals urged all ministers to complete their college training in order to receive adequate protection against dangerous theological conceptions.[1] Orthodoxy must not be guilty of being obscurantistic.[2] Correct doctrine must be proclaimed by ministers who are well trained, knowing both what they believe and the beliefs of the enemy. This requires minds which adequate mental discipline and training have sharpened.[3]

In the first decade of the twentieth century occurred a brief argument in the Evangelical Association that illustrates the dedication of Evangelicals to intellectual training. Names and details are irrecoverable, but the discussion arose because of recurrence of interest in holiness doctrine about 1906-1908--the same time as the Church of the Nazarene was becoming a national organization.[4] Evangelicals had long been interested in this aspect of Christian doctrine, but had paid little attention to it

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[1]Rudolph Dubs, "Our Institutions of Learning," TE, November 8, 1905, p. 708. Many ministers either had no other training beyond public secondary education except the home course of study, or they would go to seminary without previously doing college work. Cf. E. B. Kephart, "Classical Studies in Their Relation to Religious Truth," QR, I (January, 1890), 5-6.

[2]S. P. Spreng, "Orthodoxy and Scholarship," EM, July 11, 1893, p. 440.

[3]S. P. Spreng, "Theology and Religion," EM, May 15, 1895, p. 312. See W. H. Bucks' front-page editorial, "Doctrinal Preaching," EM, September 3, 1919, p. 2.

[4]Timothy L. Smith, Called Unto Holiness (Kansas City, Missouri: Nazarene Publishing House, 1962). See Elmer T. Clark, The Small Sects in America (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1937), chap. iii. J. L. Peters treats the career of the doctrine of Christian perfection in American Methodism up to 1900 in Christian Perfection and American Methodism (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956).

since the 1870's.[1] In 1906, however, there appeared a group of holiness supporters whom Editors Spreng and Bucks denounced as fanatics. Spreng believed this Wesleyan doctrine and preached it,[2] but the men he and Bucks opposed were poorly trained and incurred the wrath of the editors for their anti-intellectualism. To believe and preach the doctrine was commendable, but not without the support of reasonable arguments:

> The best thing that could come to these dear but misguided brethren would be, to have them come in vital touch with some good mental scouring-bricks, to polish up mentally. For instance, Butler's Analogy, Shakespeare, Drummond's Natural Law in the Spiritual Realm. Or, take a course in the Correspondence College of our Church, at whose head is our honored Bishop Breyfogel. Or, it would be a fine thing for them to get their brains on the old grind-stone, by taking a classical course in our Naperville, Illinois, North-Western College, and thus get out of their holiness ruts.[3]

The same appreciation for mental training prevailed among United Evangelicals and United Brethren. Joseph Cook and Common-Sense Philosophy had left their mark upon them all, resulting in a good deal of resistance to some forms of anti-intellectualism. Faith, for instance, church leaders defined as "the acceptance on testimony of a divine communication to man."[4] It was just as rational as any principle of science. The commitment to intellectualism in religious matters became firm.

Theologians of both denominations stressed the centrality of reason in theology. J. J. Esher, the first author of a systematic theology for Evangelicals, called reason the noble gift and instrument of God, affirming

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[1] Schwab, p. 71. [2] Ibid., p. 105.

[3] W. H. Bucks, "Crankified Holiness Ministers," EM, February 19, 1908, p. 2. See S. P. Spreng, "Holiness Fanaticism or Fanatical Holiness," EM, March 21, 1906, p. 4; S. P. Spreng, "Holiness Versus Fanaticism," EM, March 13, 1907, pp. 4-5.

[4] A. W. Drury, Faith and Knowledge, p. 16.

that "der rechte Gebrauch der Vernunft ist heilige Pflicht."[1] Solomon Gamertsfelder, who wrote the next and more widely-used systematic theology, likewise stressed the rational basis of theology.[2] He showed that reason was indispensable in order to receive a revelation, to interpret it, to judge the evidence of revelation, to construct a system of doctrine, and to relate theology and philosophy.[3] All of these activities of reason were important aspects of the minister's encounter with revelation and his attempts to understand and proclaim it. Drury of Union Biblical Seminary, Bishop Mills, and Bishop E. B. Kephart were United Brethren leaders who likewise were stressing the importance of reason in authenticating revelation.[4]

Dean G. J. Kirn of North-Western College may well have been the most devoted disciple of reason in either denomination. Although he was not sympathetic to fundamentalism, he contributed to the growing confidence in reason in the Evangelical Association. His writings give ample evidence that he had drunk deeply from some Neo-Hegelian spring. They were read

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[1]Bischof J. J. Escher, Christliche Theologie (Cleveland, Ohio: Thomas and Mattill, Verleger, 1899-1901), I, 31. "The correct use of reason is a holy duty." Cf. G. J. Kirn, "Rational Belief and Religious Faith," EM, June 23, 1897, p. 385.

[2]Gamertsfelder, Systematic Theology, p. vii. [3]Ibid., pp. 121-25.

[4]Drury, Faith and Knowledge, p. 17; J. S. Mills wrote in "Watson's Institutes" (QR, I [January, 1890], 33-46): "If we cannot trust our reason, then we have no means by which to prove that the Bible is a revelation from God." E. B. Kephart, Apologetics, p. 10. Cf. this editorial note in RT, February 15, 1893, p. 97: "Faith, when sanctioned by reason, can always be trusted; for then it never fails to lead to the truth. And the Christian faith is in perfect accord with the highest reason." See the report on President Keister's baccalaureate sermon at Lebanon Valley College: "The Rational Vindication of the Christian Faith" (RT, June 22, 1910, p. 17). Also see T. J. Sanders, "God--the Ultimate A Priori Condition," QR, I (July, 1890), 201-213.

widely and appreciated by many of his fellow churchmen.[1] Kirn's optimism was almost unbounded. He was confident that as man confronted the world he need have no hesitation; he may have "full assurance that it must yield all of its possession to him."[2] Reason may be sure "that the demands of its nature are the principles of reality."[3] Because this is true, man may be certain of the existence of God; belief in his existence is "a necessity of reason."[4] Furthermore, worship is not the result of our having been "overcome by feelings of wonder and amazement; but because we carry the idea of the Absolute Personality in our own nature."[5] And for Kirn the Absolute Personality was essentially rational.

The continuing study of Christian evidences also manifests this concern for the place of reason in theology. Warriors in the mid-nineteenth-century struggle against the infidel had employed this approach, and it still appealed to many.[6] J. P. Landis, United Brethren theology professor, gave the investigation of Christian Evidences a large place in his thought.

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[1] S. P. Spreng, Review of Religion a Rational Demand, by G. J. Kirn, EM, December 5, 1900, pp. 776-77. See S. L. Umbach, "The Reasonableness of a Special Revelation," EM, October 6, 1909, p. 6, which seems to repeat some of Kirn's arguments, particularly with regard to the personality of God.

[2] Kirn, Religion a Rational Demand, p. 7. Kirn wrote: "All being is transparent to thought" (Ibid., pp. 31-32).

[3] Ibid., p. 10. [4] Ibid., p. 23. [5] Ibid., p. 108.

[6] C. G. Koch, "Evidences of the Divinity of Christianity," EM, November 29, 1899, pp. 756-57; J. B. Kanaga, "Books on Christian Evidences," EM, December 11, 1901, p. 786; a series of articles by Professor S. L. Umbach of Union Biblical Institute on "Evidences of Divine Origin of the Bible," EM, Vol. LVII (1903), passim; J. B. Kanaga, "The Place of the Resurrection of Christ in the Evidences of Christianity," EM, March 30, 1904, p. 193; symposium of leading theologians and religious leaders of the country on the best books in four categories, one of which was Christian Evidences ("Best Books for a Preacher's Library," QR, I [October, 1890], 357-63); J. W. Etter, Review of Supernatural Revelation, by C. M. Mead, QR, II (January, 1891), 77-80.

"It belongs to philosophy or reason to determine the laws of evidence which are to prove not only the doctrines, but also the facts of religion as well."[1] Conservative Christians expected discussions of miracles and the rational basis of the resurrection (or immortality) to provide "scientific proof" of Christian revelation.[2]

The belief that opinions or ideas precede and are the basis of actions was yoked with another about the nature of theological language: that men can state the truths of Christian revelation in a form so precise and correct that they never need revision. Editor I. L. Kephart clearly expressed this conviction in his statement that "well would it have been for the cause of truth and for man had the teachings of the Christian church throughout all of its past history been in full accord with the highest reason," for "in that case there would have been no necessity for revision of creeds."[3]

Some theological commentators in both denominations went further; they asserted that conservative theology had not erred in its use of reason. Therefore, no doctrines required modification or reconstruction.[4] The rather liberal editor, A. E. Hangen, paid this tribute to Bishop Fouke: "He knew what he believed, and around his beliefs he had built Chinese

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[1]J. P. Landis, "How Can Philosophy Aid the Science of Religion?" QR, V (April, 1894), 121-34.

[2]At the Bible Teachers Training School commencement in 1917 Dr. W. W. White gave the baccalaureate sermon on "The Rational Basis for Believing that the Resurrection is a Historical Fact" (TE, June 6, 1917, p. 9). R. L. Swain, "Miracles," QR, I (April, 1890), 101-15; I. L. Kephart, "Reason in Religion vs. Rationalism," RT, April 20, 1892, pp. 241-42.

[3]I. L. Kephart, "The Theology of the Future," RT, May 20, 1891, p. 305.

[4]H. B. Hartzler, "The Great Doctrines Will Stand," TE, April 19, 1911, p. 241.

walls."[1] H. F. Shupe, editor of one of the United Brethren publications, received a similar "tribute."[2] Both Bishop Weekley of the United Brethren and Reuben Yeakel of the Evangelicals made it clear that they were convinced of the wisdom of earlier denominational decisions that rendered their respective statements of faith unchangeable.[3] To men who strongly approved of fixed and unchangeable statements of faith, the changing character of the New Theology made it additionally objectionable. Even J. W. Etter, the liberal editor of the Quarterly Review, was not happy with a view of truth which held that it was constantly changing.[4] Louis M. Sweet, professor at Bible Teachers Training School in New York, with which the United Evangelicals were affiliated,[5] put it clearly. The first assumption of modernism (and he named nine others) with which he fundamentally disagreed was its belief "that there is nothing doctrinally or even basic and unchangeable true in historic Christianity which forbids its indefinite modification in response to the demands of modern thought.[6]

Others agreed.[7] If truth be truth, and error be error, why is it

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[1]EM, February 19, 1923, pp. 3-6. [2]RT, October 30, 1926, p. 5.

[3]W. M. Weekley, "Our Denominational Standards," RT, July 15, 1922, pp. 7-8; Reuben Yeakel, The Church Discipline, Doctrine and Confession of Faith (Cleveland, Ohio: Publishing House of the Evangelical Association, 1899), p. 9. Cf. also G. M. Mathews, "The Church and the Times," QR, III (July, 1892), 193-205.

[4]J. W. Etter, Review of A Compendium of Christian Theology, by William Burt Pope, QR, I (January, 1890), 88-95.

[5]Many United Evangelical theological students attended Bible Teachers Training School, especially after the East Pennsylvania Conference gave it formal approval in 1912 (TE, May 8, 1912, p. 290).

[6]Louis M. Sweet, "Modernism and Christianity," TE, November 14, 1922, pp. 12-13.

[7]W. H. Bucks, "The Dean of the Divinity School of the Chicago University, and the Dean of the Moody Bible Institute," EM, December 3, 1913, pp. 4-5.

necessary to recognize divergent interpretations? There is no mid-point between truth and error. Have Christians over the centuries been in error about fundamental doctrines? If not--if they have not been deceived, cannot contemporary Christians cling to a creed which is equally orthodox for all times? Such certainty then provides a clear-cut authoritative basis for quick and easy condemnation of erroneous views about the meaning and purpose of human existence, whether their origins be philosophy, science, or a liberal school in religion. Since truth never changes and admits of only one interpretation, the contemporary Christian need not be hesitant in confronting the competing ideologies of his time.[1]

Spread of Theological Literacy

Undergirded by these two convictions--that ideas precede action and provide the basis for it, and that theological language is of such a nature that Christian doctrine requires no radical revision--theological study could and did spread more widely throughout both denominations. No one need be afraid to investigate the historic Christian doctrines, for these sentinels safeguarded the whole endeavor. Many are the evidences of quickened interest in theological study: the appearance of an increasing number of books on Christian theology by denominational authors,[2] the rise in esteem for those leaders of the church who also provided guidance in

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[1]Rev. George R. Riffert, "A Plain Account of Entire Sanctification," TE, January 31, 1912, p. 66; A. M. Long's response to the controversy between Weekley and Keister previously carried in the Telescope (March 4, 1922, pp. 14-15).

[2]Jonathan Weaver (ed.), Christian Doctrine; Jonathan Weaver, Christian Theology (Dayton, Ohio: United Brethren Publishing House, 1900); Escher, Christliche Theologie; Gamertsfelder, Systematic Theology; Drury, Outlines of Doctrinal Theology; E. B. Kephart, Apologetics. United Brethren published a series of ten doctrinal books in 1902 (RT, August 20, 1902, p. 1060); Yeakel, The Church Discipline.

theological matters,[1] and the spate of articles on theological subjects, many of which are well-written and exhibit considerable knowledge.[2]

The United Evangelicals, whose split with the Evangelical Association in the early nineties deprived them of a theological seminary, gave considerable attention to supplying theological training in such ways as they could. Central Pennsylvania College began a two-year theological course,[3] and Western Union College (now Westmar) in Iowa likewise instituted a two-year curriculum for ministerial preparation.[4] Several sections of the denomination held regular ministerial meetings at which theological topics were discussed, apparently to supplement the admittedly deficient theological education provided by the church.[5]

Editor S. P. Spreng and his Messenger contributed to widespread familiarity with theological issues in the Evangelical Association. During the years of Spreng's connection with the periodical he made it the means

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[1]Bishop Dubs was called "a profound theologian" (TE, April 10, 1889, p. 114). See Dubs' sketch of Jacob Hartzler on the occasion of his retirement (TE, March 15, 1911, p. 169); editorial praise for Gamertsfelder's Systematic Theology (TE, November 19, 1913, p. 17); Funk, pp. 147-48.

[2]See especially Rev. Augustus Krecker, "The Resurrection of Christ and the Doctrine of Immortality," EM, April 11, 1900, pp. 225-26; J. B. Kanaga, "The Incarnation in Theological Thought," EM, December 23, 1903, pp. 801-802; S. P. Spreng, "The Security of the Believer," EM, December 14, 1904, p. 972; Harvey Moyer, "The Indebtedness of the Church to Calvinism," EM, January 3, 1912, pp. 6-7; J. P. Landis, "Our Confession of Faith," QR, III (April, 1892), 95-111.

[3]See the report of General Conference Proceedings in TE, October 25, 1898, p. 340.

[4]H. H. Thoren, "What Constitutes a Fair Ministerial Education?" TE, December 27, 1905, p. 819. Later this curriculum was expanded into a Department of Theology and Religious Education (TE, July 2, 1913, p. 6).

[5]M. T. Maze, "Ministerial Convention," TE, July 13, 1892, p. 222; report of the Ministerial Association of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and vicinity (TE, September 24, 1913, p. 16); F. R. Blakely called for the publication of the papers of the Harrisburg meeting (TE, October 22, 1913, p. 19).

whereby people of the denomination came to appreciate both the general importance of doctrinal issues and the finer points of specific theological discussions.[1]

Several United Brethren leaders were particularly conversant with contemporary theology. A. W. Drury and J. P. Landis, professors at the seminary in Dayton, Ohio, kept a close watch on contemporary developments in theology. Other influential leaders who also were well-informed were Bishop Mills and the editors of the Quarterly Review, particularly J. W. Etter.[2] The denomination had come to expect its leaders to be more than successful revival preachers; they must be well-trained and skillful guides in the discussion of theological questions.

Objects of Defense

A Pattern of Church Life

The object of defense for all this theological activity was not so much a traditional creed or statement of faith possessed by either denomination, but the whole pattern of church life. The foremost occupation of both denominations was the business of saving souls; they were evangelistic and revivalistic. This commitment was what much of the theological discussion during this period was defending. Often the same men who provided

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[1]S. L. Umbach, "Influence of the 'Messenger' upon the Theology of Our Preachers," EM, January 6, 1897, pp. 6-7. Also see S. P. Spreng, "The Study of Theology," EM, March 10, 1897, p. 152; S. P. Spreng, "A New Liberal Movement," EM, October 26, 1898, p. 680; S. P. Spreng, "Doctrinal Preaching in a Revival," EM, January 2, 1901, p. 8; J. B. Kanaga, "Saving Faith," EM, January 20, 1891, p. 33; W. H. Bucks, "Important Utterances," EM, February 28, 1893, pp. 129-30.

[2]J. P. Landis, "The Trinity--Collateral Supports," QR, III (April, 1892), 170-76; the substance of an address delivered to the graduating class of Union Biblical Seminary on May 3, 1902, by Bishop J. S. Mills ("A Change of Emphasis," QR, XIII [July-August, 1902], 193-97); A. W. Drury, "Tendencies Safe and Unsafe," RT, September 16, 1896, p. 597; A. W. Drury, "Holiness and Love," RT, May 28, 1927, p. 6.

leadership in theology were those who were the most active supporters and participants in revivalistic activity. These men had observed that liberal theology did not yield the results (converts) that conservatism did. When Howard MacQueary, the Episcopalian rector, was tried for heresy in 1891, S. P. Spreng called attention to MacQueary's confession before his own congregation on the last Sunday before his trial:

> Whether any or all persons such as were added to the communicant list during my pastorate were made earnest Christians, through my instrumentality, I am unable to say. I confess I doubt it. I am not sure that I have helped a single soul to a higher and a holier life, and the thought is more painful than I dare tell you, for no preaching, however profound or eloquent, is truly successful unless it improves the moral and spiritual character of man.[1]

Critics derided the evangelistic sterility of liberalism.[2] They might have picked on the theme of tolerance as the culprit in liberal theology, but generally they attributed the weakness of liberal churches' evangelism to the failure to take sin seriously and the consequent neglect of the doctrine of atonement.[3] A cartoon entitled "Fishing Tackle" appeared in the Telescope with this editorial comment:

> The New Theology never will succeed because it does not meet the constitutional needs of men. It never will command a large following because it does not fit honest men. . . . It is no wonder that the new theology fishing tackle catches few fish. The soul which yearns for God, which longs to do good to fellow men, which has no uplifting power in itself, comes back to the gospel of Jesus Christ. It knows the old reliable bait.[4]

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[1] EM, February 17, 1891, p. 104.

[2] As late as 1930 the editor of the Messenger records his joy that "the Evangelical Church has remained conservative despite the popularity of liberalism," for a recent survey showed that it was the conservative churches that were making the gains (Edwin G. Frye, "A Significant Statement," EM, March 1, 1930, p. 3).

[3] S. P. Spreng, "Christ Must Suffer," EM, April 26, 1892, p. 264. See the editorial note in RT, July 29, 1891, p. 465. S. P. Spreng, "Liberalism Destroys Revival-Power," EM, April 3, 1894, p. 216.

[4] J. M. Phillippi, "Fishing Tackle," RT, October 7, 1914, pp. 3, 9.

The approval of the old "blood theology" by Spreng and others was their way of calling attention to what they contended was the chief business of the church--the bringing of sinful, needy men to salvation.[1] Liberalism's doctrine of the "fatherhood of God" was unsatisfactory because it failed to make a careful distinction between the universal fatherhood of God by creation and his fatherhood by regeneration and redemption. "To teach unqualifiedly that God is the Father of all is an entirely unscriptural universalism. We become the children of God in the proper New Testament sense by regeneration."[2] For the same reason conservatives vehemently opposed the doctrine of future probation after death preached by Henry Ward Beecher and others.[3] It had the potential for robbing the church of her desire to win the lost to Christ.[4]

Devotion to revivalism provided the basis for quite different

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[1]S. P. Spreng, "When I See the Blood," EM, March 7, 1906, p. 4; S. P. Spreng, "Theological Preaching," EM, October 24, 1906, pp. 4-5. See Thomas Bowman, "Intolerance--Apostasy," EM, July 15, 1914, p. 7, and an editorial note on this article.

[2]S. P. Spreng, "The Fatherhood of God," EM, August 19, 1896, p. 536; W. Yost, "The Fatherhood of God," EM, April 23, 1919, pp. 6-7.

[3]Rev. I. A. Smith, "The New Theology," TE, June 11, 1890, p. 185; J. W. Domer, "The Progressive Nature of Revelation," TE, August 4, 1897, p. 242; S. P. Spreng, Review of "The Light of the World," by Sir Edwin Arnold, EM, March 31, 1891, p. 200.

[4]To say that theological erosion was accelerated by revivalism in American Protestantism (Winthrop Hudson, American Protestantism [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961], p. 133) is a misleading generalization. This may have been true in the middle of the nineteenth century, but it does not apply to Evangelicals and United Brethren at the end of the century. One may object, of course, to the direction taken by their theology. This, however, does not change the fact that to the extent that they engaged in theological activity and study, they did so in the interest of defending their revivalistic tradition. Revivalism led them to renewed theological interest; they found the two compatible--until theologically sophisticated fundamentalists threatened the unity of other denominations in the twenties. Then they withdrew to their earlier anti-intellectualism.

attitudes toward fundamentalism's theology of dispensational premillennialism. On the one hand, it was the occasion for S. P. Spreng's blistering editorial blast at the missionary activities of the Christian Missionary Alliance:

> People of orthodox views should also know that this organization is strongly premillennial and does not even propose to convert the heathen. They simply declare it their design to preach the Gospel of the kingdom as a witness to the end that God may gather out his chosen ones. Their missionaries go from place to place proclaiming the Gospel as they interpret it, and pass on. Little or no effort is made to bring men to an experimental, saving knowledge of the truth. No doubt some are converted, but comparatively few.[1]

Interest in the premillennial point of view among the rank and file was sufficient to cause one person to complain that Evangelicals on the Pacific coast "did not seem to expect a revival." They were reluctant to support a large-scale expansion movement of the Evangelical Association which had begun in 1919 because "they did not expect for 'something to happen' till Jesus would come."[2] Although the seminary professors at Naperville dismissed their classes (for one day) to attend the International Prophetic Conference held at Moody Bible Institute in 1914,[3] no major leader was interested in promoting it.

The response to premillennialism among United Evangelicals, however, was just the reverse. The commitment of The Evangelical was so complete that no article condemning premillennialism ever appeared in its pages.

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[1]S. P. Spreng, "Some Missionary Heresies," EM, November 9, 1898, p. 712.

[2]Jacob Stocker, "Pessimism or Optimism, Which?" EM, February 18, 1920, pp. 5-6.

[3]H. E. Williamson reported that "the day was profitably spent" ("The International Prophetic Conference," EM, March 11, 1914, p. 12). From personal acquaintance with Williamson, the writer knows that he was a conservative and an avid supporter of the holiness campmeeting movement. Several writers in the church press declare themselves to be premillennialists. See J. G. Schwab, "The Second Coming of Christ," EM, February 16, 1898, p. 97; G. S. Bergstresser, "The War and Prophecy," EM, September 30, 1914, p. 7; A. W. Orwig, "The Lord's Return Pre-Millennial or Post-Millennial," EM, June 21, 1916, pp. 6-7; A. W. Orwig, "Stupendous Events at Christ's Return," EM, August 30, 1916, pp. 6-7. Cf. Dr. A. A. Long, "Points on Premillennialism," RT, September 27, 1916, pp. 6-7.

H. B. Hartzler, who held the editorial chair for nearly twenty years (1888-1890, 1895-1902, 1910-1920), virtually turned it into a platform for promoting dispensationalism and premillennialism.[1] He was a friend and great admirer of Dr. C. I. Scofield, dispensationalist leader who was one of his successors in a pastorate in Northfield, Massachusetts, home of several of the Moody enterprises.[2] Other Scofield fans were the Rev. Charles G. Unangst,[3] frequent contributor to The Evangelical, and the Rev. J. W. Davis, a United Evangelical pastor in Illinois who later became the dean of men at Moody Bible Institute.[4]

These men were attracted to premillennialism and remained interested in it because they were convinced that the most "spiritually-minded" men were premillennarians. "What does it mean," wrote Hartzler, "'that the most devout, faithful, efficient pastors and teachers and evangelists in the leading Protestant denominations of our times are pre-millennialists, and that the congregations whose gifts for missions and other benevolences are the largest and most generous per capita, are those which have been instructed in all the Word of God and are not in ignorance or unbelief concerning the appearing of the Lord and His right to reign upon the throne of His father David?"[5]

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[1] TE, February 4, 1914, p. 16.

[2] "Dr. C. I. Scofield, D. D.," TE, August 16, 1921, pp. 8-9. The Scofield Reference Bible made heavy use of the categories of dispensationalism.

[3] Charles G. Unangst, "The Devotional Life of the Christian," TE, February 7, 1922, pp. 8-9.

[4] EM, September 7, 1929, p. 17. See J. W. Davis, "Premillennialism or Postmillennialism," TE, August 22, 1917, pp. 4-5. See A. J. Smith, "The Scriptural Plan of the Ages," TE, July 16, 1919, pp. 11-12.

[5] H. B. Hartzler, "What Does This Mean?" TE, April 21, 1920, p. 6. See J. W. Davis, "Premillennialism or Postmillennialism--Which?" TE, August 29, 1917, pp. 4-5.

This sentiment led United Evangelicals into close association with and interest in the leading figures of the premillennial movement. A call for a Prophetic Conference at Moody Bible Institute in 1914 included Hartzler's name on the list of signers, among whom were E. Y. Mullins, C. I. Scofield, A. C. Gaebelein, R. A. Torrey, W. B. Riley, and James M. Gray.[1] After the conference Hartzler made an appeal to send in contributions for the publication of the addresses presented there. The plan was to distribute them to foreign missionaries and theological students free of charge.[2] Four years later another Prophetic Conference attracted United Evangelical attention. The Rev. W. F. Heil, soon to be reelected bishop after an earlier term, attended this convention in Philadelphia. He was a sympathetic participant, concluding that he did "not see that these impressions could be escaped by those who attended the convention, and I see no conclusive argument by which to contravene the positions from whence they proceed."[3]

One attractive feature of premillennialism was its resistance to the confidence in man's inevitable progress which was so widespread among American Protestants at the turn of the century. Against this unwarranted optimism United Evangelicals tried to issue a prophetic protest:

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[1] TE, December 31, 1913, p. 17. See TE, January 21, 1914, p. 4, which contains more details on the prophetic conference; the front page has an appropriate quotation from the Gospels.

[2] TE, March 18, 1914, p. 5. See the notice of the appearance of the publication, The Coming and Kingdom of Christ (TE, June 3, 1914, p. 17); editorial note about a "prominent western minister" whose premillennial convictions were strengthened by the Prophetic Conference (TE, June 10, 1914, p. 5).

[3] W. F. Heil, "Bible Conference on the Return of Our Lord," TE, July 3, 1918, pp. 9-10. See TE, June 19, 1918, p. 3. Heil was the leader of those United Evangelicals who later became the Evangelical Congregational Church, refusing to accept church union with the Evangelical Association in 1922.

> The gospel knows nothing of a glorious progress of the human race in this age. . . .
>
> There is the New Testament program for the Christian's future, not a gradual development of a Christian civilization on earth, but the coming of the Lord from heaven.[1]

Editor Hartzler's premillennial point of view led him to be pessimistic about the success of the future League of Nations. Since the representatives of the various nations had "unchanged human nature and unsanctified national spirit to deal with, the problem may well be found to be a Gordian Knot, which their many fingers can not untie."[2] Hartzler could "confidently affirm that it is beyond human wisdom to devise a scheme for a League of Nations and a settlement of the questions involved that will be perfectly satisfactory to every one." Although men must use every means "to restrain and reduce lust and war," perfect peace awaits the personal return of Jesus Christ.[3] Unless the nations' representatives recognize the inherent limitations of their situations, they are merely building another Tower of Babel.[4]

Not progress, but the intervention of God in terms of Christ's personal appearance, was what premillennialists were looking for. Although they tried to avoid setting dates,[5] the stress on imminence became

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[1] J. E. Habliston, "To Whom Shall We Go?" TE, March 3, 1915, pp. 9-10. See B. R. Schultze, "The Most Important Signs of our Times," TE, August 2, 1893, pp. 241-42.

[2] H. B. Hartzler, "The Peace Conference," TE, January 22, 1919, p. 6.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid. Cf. H. B. Hartzler's denunciation of Dr. Snowden's Is the World Growing Better? ("The World Growing Better," TE, June 16, 1920, p. 7). In the United States opposition to the League of Nations may have received considerable support from dispensationalism.

[5] See Hartzler's defense of the prophetic conference on this matter (TE, February 11, 1914, pp. 4-5).

increasingly stronger. A poem with decidedly apocalyptic spirit adorned the front page of the final issue of The Evangelical in 1919. These were the final lines: "For it may be, In God's decree, This Year shall see The coming Saviour's glory."[1] Whether accompanied by the imminental theme or not, the personal return of Christ was one of the most popular topics of The Evangelical.[2]

Dispensationalism and premillennialism were attractive to United Evangelicals because they were committed to a literal approach to Scripture and to a conception of the work of the church which regarded the conversion of the lost (not social work) as the prime task. The Rev. J. W. Davis explained how different could be the conceptions of the work of the church:

> The Postmillennial cry must be and is, "The world for Christ," while the Premillennial slogan is, "Christ to the world." . . . If our God-appointed business is the saving of the nation, we will bend every effort toward the moral improvement of the masses that go to make up the nation, particularly those that must affect and influence the future government. . . . Most of our movements and efforts, including those of the Church seem to be for the improvement of public morals, the improving of environment, the correcting of social evils, etc. Many a church

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[1] TE, December 31, 1919, p. 1. See an advertisement of five books by the Publishing House of the United Evangelical Church, all on Christ's second return; one especially stresses the imminence of the return (TE, February 24, 1915, p. 32). Also see J. W. Michael, "Fundamental Scriptural Teachings as Emphasized by the United Evangelical Church," TE, February 14, 1922, pp. 14-15; Charles G. Unangst, "A Great Prayer and Bible Conference Held in Chicago, Feb. 1-5, 1922," TE, February 28, 1922, pp. 6-7.

[2] S. P. Remer, "The Second Coming of Christ," TE, June 20, 1894, p. 193; front-page article by Sir W. Robertson Nicoll, "Armageddon," TE, August 7, 1912, pp. 497, 504; Hartzler quotes Charles Hodge on the imminent return of Christ in TE, June 16, 1915, p. 6; H. B. Hartzler, "Are We Nearing the End?" TE, June 16, 1915, p. 6; H. B. Hartzler, "The Second Coming of Christ," TE, May 31, 1916, p. 7; H. B. Hartzler, The Promise of His Coming," TE, June 4, 1919, pp. 4-5; H. B. Hartzler, "Till Jesus Comes," TE, March 13, 1918, p. 6; "A Call for a Bible Conference on the Return of Our Lord," TE, May 1, 1918, p. 15; H. B. Hartzler, "'The Pre-Kingdom Return of Jesus,'" TE, November 26, 1919, pp. 8-9; "Doctrinal Resolution," TE, September 26, 1922, p. 11. At least one voice was raised advocating a change in the denomination's Articles of Faith to include a fuller statement of the millennial hope (TE, July 31, 1918, pp. 12-13).

> to-day is ever so busy with institutional and educational features, that it has not led an individual soul to an experience in salvation in years, and yet feels contented in the thought that it is doing God service sufficiently in improving the environments of those about it. The Premillenarian seeks the winning of the individual as his primary service and mission, and secondarily cooperates in these other things, because he believes that they should follow as far as possible as a subordinate work, as a consequence of men's transformation through genuine salvation.[1]

Important Doctrines

One doctrine which received much attention because of its relation to the church's work of evangelizing the lost was that of the deity of Christ. Conservatives believed that the liberal's emphasis on the human nature of Jesus Christ robbed the Gospel of its saving power. They were willing to say that "the whole plan of salvation stands or falls with the deity of Jesus Christ."[2] Jesus had not come primarily to be an example, but a Savior.[3] Modernism was contending

> that man must save himself. Salvation by character rather than character by salvation, is the motto of modern culture. All systems that emphasize the human instead of the divine are anti-Christian. Another false teaching is the substitution of human advancement for the Advent of Christ. Human hope is being set on the sons of men instead of putting it in the Advent of the Son of man.[4]

In their campaign to preserve an orthodox Christology, Evangelicals and United Brethren found little to praise in the kenosis theory of Christ's nature which became popular in England in the two or three decades after

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[1] J. W. Davis, "Premillennialism or Postmillennialism--Which?" TE, August 22, 1917, pp. 4-5. Cf. an editorial note on dispensationalism in TE, February 4, 1914, p. 16.

[2] See W. H. Bucks' front-page editorial on "The Divinity of Jesus Christ," EM, February 28, 1917, p. 1.

[3] Edwin G. Frye, "The Religion of Jesus Christ vs. Christianity," EM, March 8, 1924, pp. 2-3.

[4] Rev. F. Brandfellner, "Present Day False Teaching," TE, December 12, 1922, pp. 8-9.

the appearance of the symposium, Lux Mundi, in 1889. Basing their new interpretation on the passage in Philippians 2:5-11, Canon Liddon and others were wrestling with the problem of the real humanity of Christ. The result was the answer that Jesus emptied himself of certain divine attributes in order to exist as truly human. To Evangelicals and United Brethren such a doctrine endangered the Christian affirmation that salvation comes from God.[1]

From a settled point of view regarding the divinity of Christ both denominations evaluated the Christologies of others, pronouncing them acceptable or heretical. When several Presbyterians charged Bishop John H. Vincent of the Methodist Church with making comments at the previous summer Chautauqua to the effect that "failure to believe in the divinity of Christ does not necessarily prevent a man from becoming a Christian," S. P. Spreng sided with the Presbyterian critics.[2] When the deacons of Center Church, New Haven, Connecticut, decided in favor of a "non-theological confession of faith," Editor J. M. Phillippi pronounced it hardly a "slight theological scruple" to deny the divinity of Christ.[3] Harry Emerson Fosdick, a man

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[1] W. G. Moorehead, "The Kenosis of Christ," QR, VII (July, 1896), 191-203; J. B. Kanaga, "The Doctrine of the Kenosis of Christ," EM, January 19, 1898, p. 34; abstract of an address by David James Burrell given at a recent meeting of the American Bible League in Chicago ("The Doctrine of the Kenosis as a Subterfuge of the Anti-Biblical Critics," RT, December 5, 1906, pp. 1544-45).

[2] S. P. Spreng, "Belief in the Divinity of Christ," EM, December 2, 1896, p. 776. When President Charles Eliot of Harvard made his famous prediction in 1909 about the religion of the future, the new editor of the Telescope, J. M. Phillippi, denounced Eliot's attempt to remove "the crown of divinity from the head of the world's Redeemer" ("President Eliot's New Religion," RT, August 4, 1909, pp. 4-5).

[3] RT, September 21, 1910, p. 5. With the obvious approval of the editor, an article by Edward Everett Hale, Jr. appeared in the Messenger, telling of his conversion to the doctrine of the deity of Christ ("Immanuel: The Deity of Christ," EM, March 8, 1911, p. 7).

hardly universally loved by Evangelicals and United Brethren, nevertheless received their commendation for his support of the deity of Christ.[1] In a collection of articles which appeared in the Telescope the same year as Fosdick's famous sermon challenging fundamentalism, the United Brethren bishops each confessed his faith in the deity of Christ, noting those evidences which seemed to provide the strongest support for the doctrine.[2] This symposium provided a fitting climax to a period of theological unrest. Doctrinal discussions in the United Brethren press subsided after the church had heard from its bishops.

Men embroiled in Christological debate could not separate their concern about the divinity of Christ from the doctrine of the Virgin Birth. "It is preposterous," asserted Editor Frye, "to deny the Virgin birth of Christ and at the same time claim to enjoy the merits of his sacrificial death and triumphant resurrection."[3] It seemed equivalent to denial of the divinity of Christ.[4] Therefore, this doctrine became more firmly established as one of those articles of faith which one must accept in order to be a Christian; it was no longer an "open question." Wrote Editor W. H. Bucks:

> The Church could not by any means allow its attitude to such matters to become one of uncertainty, and maintain its own existence. It is

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[1]A. E. Hangen, "Three Christian, Unifying Challenges," TE, December 19, 1922, pp. 4-6.

[2]W. M. Bell, "Deity of Christ," RT, January 2, 1926, p. 6; W. H. Washinger, "Deity of Christ," RT, January 2, 1926, p. 7; A. B. Statton, "Deity of Christ," RT, January 2, 1926, p. 8; A. R. Clippinger, "Deity of Christ," RT, January 2, 1926, pp. 8-9.

[3]Edwin G. Frye, "The Virgin Birth of Christ," EM, November 13, 1922, p. 3.

[4]S. L. Umbach, "The Virgin Birth of Christ," EM, August 7, 1907, pp. 6-7; J. M. Phillippi, "The Virgin Birth," RT, June 5, 1926, pp. 3-5.

> obliged to be dogmatic, or else be nothing. The Gospel for "an age of doubt" can never, in the very nature of the case, be a Gospel of doubt.[1]

Evangelical and United Brethren theological commentators saw that they must link their orthodox Christology to a defense of the transcendence of God. They realized that the various current forms of materialism and immanentism constituted a threat to belief in a supernaturally provided salvation. In an incisive critique of Lyman Abbott's theology the Rev. Anton Huelster points up some of the results of Abbott's emphasis upon "God's immanence to the exclusion of his transcendence." No place is left for a doctrine of atonement through the death on the cross, since forgiveness means simply "to abandon sin and lead a better life." Huelster is convinced he can express Abbott's theology just as well in the words of Hegelian philosophy:

> Being, as it were, outside of himself in nature, God (the absolute) comes to himself in man. Mankind is the Son of God and the significance of Christ consists in the fact, that he was the first to possess the

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[1] W. H. Bucks, "The Virgin Birth of Jesus," EM, December 23, 1908, p. 3. See W. H. Bucks, "Christ in Prophecy--The Virgin Birth of Christ," EM, May 10, 1916, p. 7; J. B. Kanaga, "The Virgin-Born Messiah," EM, December 20, 1892, p. 801; J. B. Kanaga, "The Supernatural Birth of Christ," RT, December 21, 1904, p. 1606.

When the German scholar Friedrich Loofs came to lecture at Oberlin College, H. B. Hartzler expressed his sorrow that Oberlin had invited him to come, since they must have known that he did not believe in the Virgin Birth ("And Oberlin College, Too!" TE, January 14, 1914, p. 4).

See H. H. Thoren, "'Born of the Virgin Mary,'" EM, May 3, 1924, pp. 6-7; "The Virgin Birth of Jesus," EM, December 19, 1925, p. 2. The defense of other miracles besides the Virgin Birth may well be related to this concern to maintain the affirmation that salvation comes ultimately from God, not man. Cf. W. H. Bucks, "The Miraculous," EM, October 10, 1893, pp. 641-642; S. P. Spreng, "The Attack on Miracles," EM, February 26, 1902, p. 136. This defense was no mere repetition of old arguments taken out of outdated books on Christian evidences. In "The Old Theology and the New" the Rev. I. H. Albright enumerates the commendable features of the New Theology and its unpleasant ones; the first two of the latter which he lists are distaste for the miracle and a tendency to shift emphasis from the supernatural to the natural (QR, XIV [January-February, 1903], 25).

> clear consciousness of such divine sonship. Here, too, Christ's death and resurrection are of little import.[1]

Why Abbott makes so little of Christ's work, says Huelster, is

> because he has no conception of sin. With him sin is only "weakness," "animalism," imperfect development. As soon as the latent divine life in man is sufficiently evolved, he will "repent," i. e. abandon sin and lead a better life, overcome his weakness and animalism and be a man.[2]

Another critic of immanentism noted that those who held the liberal doctrine of the fatherhood of God tended to emphasize God's immanence rather than his transcendence. Instead of saying that God is above all, they argued that He is in all. And this produced a significant change in the doctrine of salvation:

> The doctrine of depravity, the sinfulness of sin--these go overboard. In their place we hear the "Divinity of man" smoothly phrased. When we have said this much, by logical necessity we must say the rest. The Incarnation loses its meaning: the Person of Christ is after all only a metaphysical figment of fourth century theologues, which the Church is learning to ignore: his work was that of Teacher: we may call him Master, but not Lord: and his cross, so far from being the power of God, was a hideous mistake, not necessary to satisfy Divine Justice (for a Father needs no satisfaction to receive his children)--at the best, simply a lesson in sacrifice for after generations. We shall hear little about salvation, but much about social regeneration and social service.[3]

Admittedly, not all those who believed in the universal fatherhood of God accepted all of these implications. If so, they were "wise, but inconsistent," for the logical implications of such a "loose, flabby concept of God" were a minimizing of God's transcendent glory and holiness, his wrath against sin, and the underrating of "the experience of personal salvation."[4]

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[1] Anton Huelster, "Pointers on Mr. Abbott's 'Evolution of Christianity,'" TE, October 19, 1892, p. 329.

[2] Ibid., p. 330.

[3] J. E. Habliston, "The Fatherhood of God," TE, January 1, 1913, pp. 6-7.

[4] Ibid. Bishop Weekley's opposition to evolution was based on its denial of supernaturalism (RT, October 14, 1922, p. 15).

S. P. Spreng aptly summarized the commitment of both denominations to supernaturalism in his book which carried episcopal approval and became part of the required reading course for young preachers:

> Everything essential to Christianity is supernatural. We have a supernaturally produced Bible. Jesus, the Son of God is supernatural in person, in character, in teaching, in influence. The new birth, the forgiveness of sins, the hope of eternal life, the soul's triumph over moral evil, all this and much more is supernatural.[1]

Spreng fittingly relates supernaturalism to the church's concern for saving souls. To a great extent the successful experience of Evangelicals and United Brethren in soul-winning was the decisive factor that kept them firm in their adherence to traditional orthodoxy and led many of them into sympathy with or active participation in the fundamentalist crusade. Adoption of the New Theology would have required a wholesale revamping of church life in both denominations. This they were not prepared to do either by intellectual and theological training or by practical experience. Both were successful revivalistic churches;[2] theirs was a fundamentalist posture.

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[1]Spreng, What Evangelicals Believe, p. 55. C. C. Goen maintains that the central issue in the fundamentalist controversy was "the supernatural nature of Christianity" ("Fundamentalism in America," Southwestern Journal of Theology, II [October, 1959], 60).

[2]S. A. Walton, "Life: Its Nature and Origin," TE, September 13, 1893, pp. 289-90; S. P. Spreng, "The Immorality of Atheistic Pessimism," EM, May 31, 1905, p. 344; "The Supernatural in Christianity," EM, July 18, 1906, p. 4. See J. W. Etter's review of George Park Fisher's The Nature and Method of Revelation, in which the foe is identified as "open or latent pantheism," since deism is conquered; Etter thinks Fisher's book is an excellent correction of Matthew Arnold and Professor Huxley (QR, I [October, 1890], 382).

XIV. FRATERNIZATION WITH FUNDAMENTALISTS

Friends of the Faith

As the fundamentalist controversy moved towards its peak in the twenties, the pressure mounted to line up enemies on one side and friends on the other. There was no middle ground. This polarization resulted in the clear-cut identification of supporters of the New Theology, heretics, Unitarians, Universalists, Harnack, Eliot, Fosdick, the religious education movement, liberal institutions of higher education and others as enemies. On the opposite side gathered a heterogeneous company of friends of the faith--largely because of their defense of a literal approach to Scripture and of instantaneous conversionism. This collection of friends may have differed among themselves on many matters, but they had one common effect on Evangelicals and United Brethren--they intensified their fundamentalist posture until many in both denominations were both sympathetic to and gave active support to the organized fundamentalist movement.

One of these friends was Horace L. Hastings, who produced a series of anti-infidel writings. United Evangelicals met him at one of their Bible Conferences in Pennsylvania and cultivated his friendship during the nineties.[1] Others on the list were L. W. Munhall, William E. Biederwolf,

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[1] TE, November 22, 1893, p. 372; "Perkasie Park Bible Conference," TE, August 4, 1897, p. 244; H. L. Hastings, "The Warfare with Unbelief," TE, October 6, 1897, p. 314; a three-column, front-page picture and death notice of Hastings (TE, October 31, 1899, p. 345); Bishop William Horn, "Contradictions," EM, August 22, 1917, pp. 5-6; H. L. Hastings, "Remarks on the Mistakes of Moses," RT, November 2, 1892, p. 689; W. R. Funk's interview with I. L. Kephart (RT, November 4, 1908, p. 39).

A. B. Simpson (founder of the Christian Missionary Alliance), Mel Trotter, C. I. Scofield (of Scofield Reference Bible fame), Robert Dick Wilson, A. C. Gaebelein, R. A. Torrey, Andrew Murray, Clarence Macartney, and the famed revivalist, Billy Sunday.[1]

Evangelicals and United Brethren met these and other conservative leaders at such places as Bible conferences held at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. The president of the institution, Dr. James Gray, was a more familiar figure to United Evangelicals than some of their own denominational leaders. When Shailer Mathews took office as president of the Federal Council of Churches in 1913, Editor Hartzler of The Evangelical expressed his sorrow publicly; his preference lay with men like Gray:

> If the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America is to be committed to this modern liberal movement, of which its President is a representative, then the United Evangelical Church must stand aside, with its old Bible and its soul-winning propaganda, and let the "liberal" procession pass on. We stand with the company of men and women who believe the Word of God, even as it is believed and taught in such institutions as "the various Bible Institutes which have grown up in Chicago," and elsewhere, and the denominational schools where personal salvation and equipment for Christian work are rated above mere intellectual inflation, rather than with those whose course is determined by "the general trend of modern scientific methods or conclusion"--away from the Bible.[2]

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[1] TE, January 6, 1909, p. 5. An editorial note tells of Scofield's change from Congregational to Presbyterian because the former were "growing too liberal in their theological views" (TE, March 12, 1913, p. 5). Charles G. Unangst, "A Great Prayer and Bible Conference Held in Chicago, Feb. 1-5, 1922," TE, February 28, 1922, pp. 6-7; S. P. Spreng, "The Torrey-Alexander Meetings in Toronto," EM, February 7, 1906, pp. 4-5; W. H. Bucks, "Dr. Torrey's Defense of the Old Theology," EM, February 14, 1917, p. 4; Edwin G. Frye, "Fosdick or Paul at Easter Time," EM, April 4, 1925, p. 2; Edwin G. Frye, "Dr. Macartney Indicts Modernism," EM, May 30, 1925, p. 4; I. L. Kephart, "Christ's Attitude Toward Error," RT, December 6, 1899, p. 1554; C. H. Wetherbe, "Fundamentals," RT, August 24, 1910, p. 9; W. A. Sunday, "Today's Liberalism," RT, December 2, 1922, p. 13.

[2] H. B. Hartzler, "'The Awakening of American Protestantism,'" TE, December 10, 1913, pp. 4-5; M. A. Martin, "Dr. James M. Gray and the Ministers on the Pacific Coast," TE, December 24, 1919, p. 11.

The Great Commoner, William Jennings Bryan, appeared at three successive United Brethren General Conferences as guest speaker. The first time he spoke almost entirely on temperance reform, but in the second address his topic was dangerous forms of belief. The General Conference reacted with more than applause. In response to Bryan's address Bishop Weekley introduced this resolution signed by J. P. Landis, a professor at Bonebrake Seminary, which was adopted by the Conference:

> Inasmuch as there has come to our attention, through the address of the Honorable William Jennings Bryan, Attorney J. Blackburn Ware, Professor A. A. Maysilles, all eminent laymen, and Dr. Robert E. Speer, the fact that the drift of the world is toward the dangerous ground of materialistic unbelief, and a substitution of human wisdom and human efficiency for the wisdom of God and the efficiency of our Christian religion, and that these have referred respectively to the blighting influence of modern forms of unbelief in public life, in church life, and in school curricula, and in missionary enterprise,
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> Therefore, Be It Resolved:
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> 1. That we express our thanks to God that this blight for the most part has failed to find advocates in our church, school and missionary life.
>
> 2. That we again affirm our confident faith in the simple teaching, but almighty power of Jesus Christ, God's Son and our Savior, and pledge ourselves unrelentingly to the overthrow of destructive criticism until the last vestige of it shall be driven from the face of the earth.
>
> 3. That this Conference send out its word of warning to our clergy, membership, church boards, and school faculties, that they be on their guard constantly against the subtle encroachment of these dangerous tendencies of our age.[1]

When J. M. Phillippi heard that the International Sunday-school Association had cancelled Bryan's invitation to speak at their convention in Kansas City in 1922, he earnestly supported him in the pages of the Telescope.[2]

Bryan's company of supporters included Evangelicals, too. When his critics suggested that he soon was going to deny the laws of gravity and

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[1] GCJUB, 1921, p. 559. Also see GCJUB, 1917, p. 643; GCJUB, 1925, pp. 29-30.

[2] J. M. Phillippi, "Mr. Bryan Off," RT, May 6, 1922, pp. 3-4. See W. M. Weekley, "Happy Over Seven Things," RT, May 13, 1922, pp. 15-16.

that the earth is round, the Messenger published his defense.[1] The sympathy of many in both denominations was obviously with these eminent defenders of the fundamentals of the faith who had become nationally-known figures to conservative Protestants.

Another source of help in the project of defending the faith was the theological works produced by authors within the denominations themselves, but these were slow in appearing. Bishop Weaver's Christian Theology came from the press in 1900, but it was hardly more than a collection of essays on a great variety of theological topics. A later United Brethren work was A. W. Drury's Outlines of Doctrinal Theology, but it was a slender volume--and hardly more than a theological dictionary. In 1875 the Evangelicals' General Conference voted to publish a theological textbook. Four years later a stipend of $1000 was offered to the author of the best manuscript, but nobody submitted one. In an important editorial in 1892 S. P. Spreng renewed the call for a theological textbook. Reminding his readers that for almost a century they had been content to borrow their theology from sister denominations, he argued that this was not a discredit to the church. Nevertheless, the time had come for an Evangelical systematic theology, urged Spreng.

> We need to equip our men to fight the giant heresies of to-day, rather than the mummied heresies of Patristic and Medieval times. Or if modern heresies are, as in many cases, merely ancient dogmas in modern garb, our preachers should be able to detect and combat them wherever necessary for the salvation of souls. We need to equip our men to deal intelligently and effectually with all soul-destroying errors. Our ministry must form a bulwark of defense against the Zeitgeist, the liberalizing tendencies of these times. Planting ourselves firmly upon the cardinal doctrines of the Bible as those doctrines are understood by our church, we must be able to handle every weapon of defense which not only the Bible, but modern scientific research, natural, historical, archaeological and philosophical puts into our hands.[2]

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[1]Edwin G. Frye, "Mr. Bryan and His Critics," EM, April 23, 1923, p. 4.

[2]S. P. Spreng, "An Evangelical Theology," EM, May 3, 1892, p. 280.

Finally, in 1899 to 1901 appeared Bishop J. J. Esher's three-volume Christliche Theologie. Two forces militated against its widespread use. Some of his fellow Evangelicals regarded him as the prime reason why schism had split the denomination in the nineties, for he was the senior bishop during these troubled years. Then, too, the German language was being used less and less, particularly by young men entering the ministry--those who would make the greatest use of a systematic theology.

Ironically, the book which had the widest use and influence, S. J. Gamertsfelder's Systematic Theology (1913), did not perform the function which Spreng had envisioned for such a textbook in theology. Written by Spreng's own brother-in-law and former editorial associate, it was not the defense against the Zeitgeist that Spreng himself would have written. Gamertsfelder tied theology to man's religious life, not simply to the Bible or tradition. He made a place for the "Christian consciousness" and suggested other approaches to the Bible than a literalistic interpretation. His treatment of atonement theories indicates his liberal orientation. Critical of the "commercial theory," the "governmental theory," and the "penal satisfaction theory," Gamertsfelder preferred the "moral influence theory," which he calls "the ethical theory" of the atonement.[1] His work was an earnest attempt to relate the traditional concern of Evangelicals for vital Christian experience anchored in conversion to contemporary theology. What Spreng thought of it we do not know; but it clearly did not fulfill the role-expectations he had set forth in his editorial twenty years before.[2]

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[1]Gamertsfelder, Systematic Theology, pp. 268-81.

[2]United Evangelicals never had a systematic theology. In 1914 at the General Conference Bishop Rudolph Dubs was asked to prepare one, but he

Enemies of the Faith

Like other conservatives who supported the fundamentalist crusade, Evangelicals and United Brethren were quick to identify enemies of the old-time religion. Furthermore, behind them lay a century-old tradition of engaging in theological discussion primarily for defensive purposes. As they entered the twentieth century, they had no difficulty in locating numerous foes to combat.

The old foe of "infidelity" no longer attracted much of the fire power of denominational theologians. Infidels could still draw an occasional shot,[1] but that enemy really received more attention through obituary notices.[2] Although infidelity was rapidly passing away, many other foes stepped forward to fill Satan's ranks. The list is a long one: materialism, higher criticism, alcoholism, doctrines of probation beyond the grave, annihilationism, errancy of the Bible, pantheism, new forms of rationalism, socialism, and the movement known as the Interchurch World Movement, an ill-fated ecumenical venture.[3] Another was the Young Men's

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died the next year before he could carry out the commission of the Conference. On the course of study were such works as Wakefield's Systematic Theology and Olin Curtis's The Christian Faith (TE, October 21, 1914, pp. 16-17). In 1919 when Gamertsfelder retired from the presidency of Evangelical Seminary, Editor H. B. Hartzler of The Evangelical had words of praise for him (TE, June 11, 1919, p. 3). Either he had not read Gamertsfelder's Systematic Theology, or else he did not understand it.

[1] J. G. Schwab, "Modern Unbelief: What it Is, and How to Meet It," EM, April 24, 1894, p. 258.

[2] S. P. Spreng comments on the death of Ernest Renan in "The Consolations of Atheism" (EM, November 15, 1892, p. 728). See H. Plantikow, "The Bible," EM, March 13, 1895, p. 162; S. P. Spreng, "R. G. Ingersoll's Death," EM, July 26, 1899, p. 472.

[3] J. P. Landis, "Some of the Foes of Christianity," QR, I (January, 1890), 56-64. See the report of J. Berg Esenwein's address to the East Pennsylvania Conference of the United Evangelical Church (TE, March 11, 1896, p. 82); J. W. Domer, "The Progressive Nature of Revelation," TE,

Christian Association, whose apostasy was patent in the fact that only twenty-five per cent of its members were Christians and only ten per cent were actively related to the Christian church. Furthermore, the "Y" appeared to be far more interested in the gym and ballground than in "the application of a Savior's love to a sinsick and wretched world."[1]

Heretics of all stripes provided another target. The Charles Briggs case in the 1890's received the most attention. S. P. Spreng made it clear why he and other Evangelicals opposed Briggs. The differences ran deeper than dogma. What Briggs had been saying ran counter to the evangelistic thrust of Spreng's denomination:

> Dogma without life is a corpse; life without dogma is a phantom. But that the "new theology" has spiritual life and the old is an empty, lifeless dogma, is an assertion of Professor Briggs. History is against that assertion; Christian achievement is against it. At best this new theology offers us an emasculated Gospel, full of speculation, undemonstrable theories, and is intolerably pedantic and dogmatic. As for us, we will cling to the old Bible and the old standard with their tried and rugged strength, at least until the "new theology" shall have shown its strength by doing "greater works than these" in the moral regeneration and spiritual vitalization of man. Forward, with the old banner![2]

Other heretics who did not escape notice were Preserved Smith and two Episcopalians, the Rev. Howard MacQueary and the Rev. Algernon S. Crapsey.[3] Approving of the conviction of Crapsey for his alleged denial of the divinity of Christ, the Virgin Birth, the bodily resurrection of Jesus and the

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August 4, 1897, p. 242; "Some Phases of the Interchurch Movement," TE, December 31, 1919, pp. 9-10.

[1]Rev. W. F. Berger, "Present Status of the Protestant Church," QR, V (October, 1894), 345.

[2]S. P. Spreng, "The New Theology," EM, November 24, 1891, pp. 744-45. See J. W. Etter, "A Modern Iconoclast," QR, II (April, 1891), 181-82; S. P. Spreng, "The Briggs Case," EM, June 6, 1893, pp. 360-61; editorial note in TE, June 7, 1893, p. 180.

[3]W. H. Bucks, "Heresy," EM, March 28, 1893, p. 193; EM, March 24, 1891, p. 185.

Trinity, Spreng wrote: "It is the duty of the Church to maintain sound doctrine. Heresy and spiritual death always go together. The truth makes men free, not error."[1] Spreng was simply repeating a principle he had enunciated before and which received support by many others both in his denomination and also among United Brethren. When Borden P. Bowne, the Methodist Personalist on the faculty of Boston University, was brought to trial before his conference in 1904, Spreng had written:

> Heresy trials, while they are to be deprecated, sometimes seem to become necessary. It is well that there are in every denomination watch dogs of orthodoxy, who resent all doctrinal aberrations. It makes the dangerous fellows more cautious and more conservative than they would otherwise be.[2]

One of Spreng's successors, Edwin G. Frye, declared that his denomination's defense of the faith would include a supervision of what was preached from the pulpit and taught in the church's colleges and seminaries.[3] As late as the mid-twenties both Evangelicals and United Brethren still took an interest in heresy-hunting.

Both denominations continued to have no esteem for Unitarianism and Universalism. When the noted evangelist, the Rev. B. Fay Mills, left his ministry in Presbyterian and Congregational churches to become a Unitarian, the church press mourned his backsliding.[4] When Mills returned to the

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[1]S. P. Spreng, "A Heresy Trial," EM, May 16, 1906, p. 4.

[2]S. P. Spreng, "A Heresy Trial," EM, April 27, 1904, p. 264. The United Brethren bishop, C. J. Kephart, likewise defended heresy-hunting ("Heresy-Hunting," RT, February 24, 1923, pp. 12-13).

[3]Edwin G. Frye, "The Church as the Defender of the Faith," EM, February 19, 1923, p. 4.

[4]H. B. Hartzler, "Rev. B. Fay Mills," TE, September 15, 1897, p. 292; see I. L. Kephart, "B. Fay Mills' Step Backward," RT, October 6, 1897, pp. 1251-52.

faith of his earlier years, his decision was applauded.[1] United Evangelicals wrote off the famous leader of the Social Gospel movement, Walter Rauschenbusch, as an "unsafe teacher" because of his commendation of the Universalist Church.[2] When the noted revivalists A. C. Dixon, A. T. Pierson, and the Rev. L. Broughton came under the condemnation of the famous Brooklyn preacher, Newell Dwight Hillis, for their attack on Unitarianism, S. P. Spreng responded with this characteristic judgment: "These men did right to attack Unitarianism. Our position may be characterized as illiberal, but better be a little illiberal, than to connive at deceiving the people with error and poisoning their souls with falsehood."[3]

A slight tremor shook American Protestantism in 1909 when the distinguished Unitarian president of Harvard University, in the closing address to the Summer School of Theology, described the religion of the future. The theological seismographs of Evangelicals and United Brethren felt the shock and reacted, for Eliot, according to one commentator, had set forth a new religion which was to "ignore all authority, either spiritual or temporal; to reject the idea of sin; to eliminate everything supernatural; to assume the recuperative and regenerative element in human nature, and to develop humanity as self-sufficient for all the conditions of life and happiness."[4] Coming from a Unitarian, it was not unexpected,

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[1] H. B. Hartzler, "Returning from Wilderness Wanderings," TE, July 14, 1915, pp. 6-7.

[2] TE, August 5, 1914, p. 3.

[3] S. P. Spreng, "Orthodoxy and Unitarianism," EM, February 14, 1900, p. 104.

[4] Rev. J. H. Keagle, "The 'Higher Education' and the 'Higher Criticism,'" TE, September 8, 1909, p. 566. See David James Burrell, "The New Religion," EM, September 15, 1909, p.8; J. M. Phillippi, "President Eliot's New Religion," RT, August 4, 1909, pp. 4-5. See Smith, Handy, Loetscher, II, 233-38.

but it still elicited earnest rebuttals.

Another prominent figure at which both denominations directed their wrath was Harry Emerson Fosdick. In the summer of 1922 Fosdick delivered a sermon, "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?, which set off a bitter controversy that raged for several years. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church eventually forced him out of First Presbyterian Church of New York, but soon afterwards he accepted the pastorate of the Park Avenue Baptist Church, which became the famous Riverside Church. Even before the famous sermon United Brethren had developed a dislike for him. Just after World War I Fosdick had made the charge that the religion of the trenches excelled that of the churches, phrasing his critique in language that revealed his liberal theology.[1]

When the big eruption occurred in the summer of 1922, J. M. Phillippi blasted Fosdick for stooping "to unmanly ridicule when speaking of present theologians being fed with a spoon--implying that those who believe in the faith of the fathers are of a weak body and undeveloped mind, and quite unable to do independent thinking."[2] The United Brethren editor went on to criticize Fosdick's theology for its rejection of the divinity of Christ, its attenuation of the doctrine of atonement, its failure to take sin seriously enough, its rejection of the authority of the Bible, its reduction of the church from a divine institution to nothing more than a cultural society, and its abridgment of the doctrine of salvation to little more than a program of social betterment. Phillippi exhorted United Brethren to "stand

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[1]A United Brethren commentator responded with the assertion that "the Doctor gives evidence that he is not in full sympathy with the teachings of Jesus Christ and his apostles, and therefore is not in position to help the boys to the things that are vital to holy living (S. A. Walton, "'The Trenches and the Church,'" RT, May 3, 1919, p. 2).

[2]J. M. Phillippi, "Whither Headed?" RT, July 8, 1922, p. 3.

by the faith that has saved souls and made the world better."[1]

Three years later, when Fosdick and the well-known leader of conservatives, Clarence Macartney, clashed over the doctrine of the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, Editor Frye of the Messenger called on Evangelicals to line up behind Macartney.[2] Fosdick had acquired a conspicuous place on the list of enemies of the faith.

The liberal religious education movement was another foe. The theological views of many persons active in the movement became evident in a series of closely graded lessons which first appeared in 1910, authorized by the International Sunday School Convention.[3] Evangelicals first noticed them in 1912 when Editor Bucks of the Messenger issued a warning against "the syndicated system of graded Sunday-school lessons" for their "serious departure from orthodoxy."[4] A United Evangelical critic was far more specific:

> 1. They put the Scriptures out of the place they have always held as the foundation of instruction in the Sunday-school.
> 2. They are naturalistic and fail to emphasize the redemptive work of Christ and the Holy Spirit. Some of them substitute the rationalistic speculation of the New Theology for the authoritative teaching of God's revelation of redemption.
> 3. Some of them use extra-Biblical material, such as biographies and nature studies, putting them on an equality with the Word of God.
> 4. Their leaning toward higher criticism.
> 5. A false theory of child life.[5]

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[1] Ibid. See Edwin G. Frye's comments on Presbyterians' action in the Fosdick case ("The Theological Ferment," EM, June 16, 1923, p. 2). Cf. Edwin G. Frye, "The Church as the Defender of the Faith," EM, February 19, 1923, p. 4.

[2] Edwin G. Frye, "Fosdick or Paul at Easter Time," EM, April 4, 1925, p. 2.

[3] Supra, pp. 273-74.

[4] W. H. Bucks, "A Note of Warning," EM, May 22, 1912, p. 5.

[5] Charles G. Unangst, "The Question of Graded Lessons in the Sunday Schools," TE, June 11, 1913, pp. 7-8.

Furthermore, wrote another United Evangelical critic, they quoted Kent and Driver, both of whom "openly cast doubt on the inspiration of portions of God's Word."[1] In 1914 The Evangelical carried advertisements of several graded Sunday School lesson series, but all of them indicated that the objectionable parts had been purged.[2]

The Methodist Board of Publication acquired a place on the list of heretics with its errant Sunday School lesson materials. In a fiery editorial H. B. Hartzler called attention to some Methodist materials which did not interpret literally chapters twenty-five to thirty-one of Exodus, urging his readers to stick to the lesson helps furnished by the United Evangelical Church. "If there should be any of the poisonous stuff above referred to in any home or Sunday school of our Church, out with it and commit it to the flames."[3]

Leaders of the church began to recognize that the breeding ground for much of the "poisonous stuff" they were encountering in Sunday School lesson materials, in the pulpit, and elsewhere were certain leading centers of higher education and theological training. Conservatives were easily able to identify the University of Chicago, Yale University, and Union Theological Seminary of New York as the leaders in the production of heretics.[4]

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[1]B. R. Schultze, "The Graded Lessons--More Evidence of Their Dangerous Tendencies," TE, August 27, 1913, pp. 20-21. See editorial note telling of a lecture on the subject given by Dr. W. M. Stanford (TE, June 3, 1914, p. 16).

[2]TE, December 2, 1914, pp. 27-30.

[3]H. B. Hartzler, "Death in the Methodist Pot," TE, July 5, 1916, p. 7. Cf. W. H. Bucks's warning against heterodox Methodist Sunday School materials; Bucks asserted that the materials of the Evangelical Association were "safe and sane" (EM, July 19, 1916, p. 5). Cf. TE, January 23, 1918, pp. 6-7.

[4]Rudolph Dubs, "Our Institutions of Learning," TE, November 8, 1905, p. 708.

Editor J. M. Phillippi informed United Brethren about the Christological heresy of Professor George Burman Foster of Chicago and reported the resulting furor among Chicago Baptists.[1] To conservatives Foster seemed to have "stated in substance that the Christianity of the future must forget Christ, and the sooner it is done the better."[2] The federation of the Divinity School of the University of Chicago with three other theological schools (one being a Unitarian school) in 1914 forebode nothing but evil for orthodoxy. Wrote Editor Hartzler: "These affiliations will not be conducive to the conservation of 'the faith once for all delivered to the saints,' unless the unexpected should happen."[3] The Telescope pronounced the University of Chicago a "nest of skepticism" and a source of greater danger to Christianity than the European war.[4]

Suspicions of Yale arose early in the period when the traditional parade of United Brethren students to Yale Divinity School became a one-way movement. So many of them were leaving the denomination that even the liberal editor, I. L. Kephart, noted that "in recent years nearly all who have gone there have left the church."[5] United Brethren leaders naturally saw a causal connection between lack of denominational loyalty and the theology of some of Yale's theological professors. They could hardly overlook

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[1] J. M. Phillippi, "Denying Divinity," RT, June 30, 1909, p. 4. Although Foster was dismissed from the Chicago Baptist Ministers' Conference for his radical views, Illinois Baptists founded Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1913 in order to provide conservative theological training, for Foster was not removed from his post in the Divinity School of the University of Chicago.

[2] Rev. J. H. Keagle, "The 'Higher Education' and the 'Higher Criticism,'" TE, September 8, 1909, p. 566.

[3] TE, July 15, 1914, p. 3.

[4] "Church's Loss of Leaders," RT, May 12, 1915, p. 5.

[5] I. L. Kephart, "Renegades?" RT, February 21, 1894, pp. 114-15.

Yale's reputation for being "one of the leading schools of infidelity and rationalistic teaching."[1]

Evangelicals sympathized with those Presbyterians who were charging that its own Union Theological Seminary had been teaching students "damnable heresies." Once again the primary source of exasperation with the New Theology (the "damnable heresy") was at the point of its inability to provide sufficient power for soul-winning. Editor Hartzler heartily agreed with the analysis and prescription offered by one Presbyterian:

> "It is utter folly to think that the men who preach such false doctrines can bring souls to Christ or extend the Kingdom of God! . . ."
> Billy Sunday, with the old gospel, preaching with Divine authority and power, puts to shame the self-conceited "learning" of rationalistic and infidel professors and preachers. We would rather send a young minister to school for a week in the big tabernacle in Philadelphia, than into the cock-pit of a faith-wrecking seminary with all its big promises and spectacular attractions, for ten years.[2]

This was but one episode in an ongoing assault on Union's heresies. After the Briggs affair in 1891 came A. C. McGiffert's heresy on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper.[3] When McGiffert acceded to the presidency of Union in 1918, Hartzler quoted with approval the judgment of the Herald and Presbyter: "It now becomes plainer than ever before that young men who wish to have evangelical relationships should not attend Union Seminary."[4] When Henry Sloane Coffin became the president in 1926, the Messenger identified him as "a leading member of the 'Modernist' group in the Presbyterian church and a champion of Dr. Fosdick in the controversy arising from his

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[1]Albert W. Bender, "Jehoiakim Outdone by Modern Critics," EM, May 5, 1920, p. 5; cf. E. M. Spreng, "Permanent Elements of Christianity," EM, September 12, 1893, pp. 577, 593.

[2]H. B. Hartzler, "Teaching 'Damnable Heresies,'" TE, February 24, 1915, p. 7.

[3]S. P. Spreng, "Heresy in Presbyterian Seminaries," EM, February 23, 1898, p. 120.

[4]H. B. Hartzler, "A Note of Warning," TE, January 30, 1918, p. 7; see H. B. Hartzler, "A Faith-Wrecking University," TE, March 13, 1918, p. 3.

occupancy of the pulpit of the First Presbyterian church."[1]

The church periodicals, particularly The Evangelical and the Messenger, accepted the responsibility of keeping the church informed about those institutions of higher education which were not safe. The editors believed that the church should exercise close supervision of its own institutions; this interest naturally extended to those schools which young people of the church might attend.[2] The judgments they pronounced took an either/or form. If there were any influential faculty member who did not accept the "fundamentals" of the faith, that school was blackballed. For instance, Smith College was not "a fit place to send a daughter" because its president denied the divinity of Jesus Christ.[3] Hartzler approved of Princeton Theological Seminary since the controversial Professor Lucius Miller of the University did not teach in the Seminary. Furthermore, Dr. Robert Dick Wilson of the Seminary was an enemy of higher criticism and lectured against it.[4] Hartzler chalked off Dickinson for its failure to take a literalistic approach to the Bible,[5] and he "quarantined" Bryn Mawr because of Professor Leuba's "bastard psychology."[6] Oberlin and Boston (B. P. Bowne was the offender) he marked off limits because of their

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[1] EM, May 8, 1926, p. 4.

[2] S. P. Spreng, "The Church and Theological Schools," EM, February 2, 1892, p. 72.

[3] TE, December 24, 1913, p. 16.

[4] H. B. Hartzler, "And Princeton University, Too?" TE, April 8, 1914, p. 5; H. B. Hartzler, "Princeton University Again," TE, April 22, 1914, p. 4; H. B. Hartzler, "The Devil in Cap and Gown," TE, September 9, 1914, p. 7.

[5] H. B. Hartzler, "Dickinson College Then and Now," TE, December 19, 1917, p. 6; H. B. Hartzler, "Dickinson College Again," TE, March 6, 1918, p. 7.

[6] TE, April 24, 1918, p. 3.

destruction of young people's faith in the Bible.[1] Their association with H. F. Rall incriminated Denver University, Iliff School of Theology, and Garrett Biblical Institute:

> Prof. H. F. Rall, of Garrett Biblical Institute, was president of Iliff School of Theology before going to Garrett. He is a German and was educated in Germany. He unloaded his German U-boat theology upon Iliff and is now doing the same at Garrett. He is the supremely moving spirit in the Commission on the Course of Study for our young preachers, and is more than any one responsible for the un-Methodistic, anti-Biblical, faith-wrecking infidel character of this course.[2]

This attention to the theological failures of various otherwise reputable institutions of higher education was not without self-interest. In addition to fitting the pattern of defense of the faith, it also provided a convenient method of contrasting the virtues of one's own institutions with the vices of others. The Evangelical was the leader in this smear campaign against dangerous institutions, for United Evangelicals were the ones who had the most difficulty providing financial support for their colleges. It was natural for them to seek every apparently legitimate means for boosting them and recruiting students. An appeal to the fears of protective parents about the religious training of their children seemed legitimate.

When Bishop Stanford gave the dedicatory address at the new Western Union College in Iowa in 1901, he mentioned that the college would be "a safe and proper place of instruction and training to such young men among us, who feel called of God into the work of the Christian ministry" since it would be safe from the "ologies and osophies and isms." The church could "feel easier" because her children would be "instructed and trained

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[1] H. B. Hartzler, "College Teaching Atheism," TE, September 17, 1919, p. 7; H. B. Hartzler, "And Oberlin, Too!" TE, June 30, 1920, p. 6.

[2] H. B. Hartzler, "Alarming and Humiliating," TE, March 5, 1919, p. 7.

under our own instructors," and this guaranteed "purity of doctrine, to be followed up by a corresponding purity of life and practice."[1] When the Rev. Charles A. Mock became president of Western Union in 1911, Bishop Dubs issued a lengthy recommendation of him in order to reassure those who had worries because he had just come from two years of graduate work at Yale.[2] The Evangelical contended that it was not anti-intellectual--that it was not opposing university and seminary education in general.[3] It simply wanted to make clear the contrast between its own safe institutions and those places where the "pagan devils" of modernism were teaching.[4]

The Evangelical Association occasionally engaged in this sort of self-praise, also. In the aftermath of the Briggs affair in the nineties S. P. Spreng pointed out why the theological school at Naperville could be trusted:

> The sad fact that many theological schools are degenerating into schools of criticism which aim to eliminate every thing supernatural from revelation and from religion, makes it all the more desirable that such schools be under denominational control. . . . Yea, if the Church would pursue her God-given mission in peace, she must carefully guard her schools against heresy and fanaticism. The Union Biblical Institute at Naperville, Illinois, with a Faculty taken directly from our active ministry, and in living connection with our Church, tried and true, is well shielded against all heretical tendencies.[5]

When critics of the seminary scored it for having faith-destroying books in its library, the president promised that the faculty would be on their

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[1]W. M. Stanford, Dedicatory Address at Western Union College Chapel, TE, October 21, 1901, pp. 330-31.

[2]TE, April 26, 1911, p. 260. [3]TE, October 24, 1917, p. 2.

[4]H. B. Hartzler, "'Paganism in Our Schools,'" TE, January 29, 1919, p. 7; Herman C. Anderson, "The Best Colleges and Seminary to Attend," TE, September 3, 1919, p. 8.

[5]S. P. Spreng, "Union Biblical Institute," EM, March 13, 1894, p. 168.

"guard not to recommend for further research any books that would tend to undermine our Evangelical faith."[1] In 1920 the Rev. D. W. Staffeld was appointed to the faculty of the seminary, having recently acquired a Master's degree in Religious Education at Boston University. This in itself raised serious questions about his qualifications because of Boston's reputation for liberalism. The president of the seminary board of trustees, Bishop G. Heinmiller, reassured the dubious that "with all his knowledge of the new--Brother Staffeld remains loyal to the orthodox standards of our Church and stands foursquare on the old Evangelical fundamentals."[2]

Why United Brethren did not share the same preoccupation with the orthodoxy of its schools is not clear. Occasionally critics complained about the faith-wrecking activities of liberals in some colleges outside the church. But the Telescope did not engage in the institution-by-institution analysis which characterized The Evangelical. One answer is the life and career of Bishop W. M. Weekley; he made them unnecessary. Coming originally from West Virginia, Weekley was a simply-educated man but enormously popular. On several occasions he made it very clear that he would permit no departure from orthodoxy in any United Brethren institutions. He hardly endeared himself to United Brethren students at Otterbein College when he appeared there about 1920 to denounce fraternities and sororities as the work of the devil.[3] His threats were sometimes veiled, but always clear, and men took them seriously because of Weekley's widespread

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[1]See the report of the president of Evangelical Theological Seminary (EM, June 4, 1919, p. 7).

[2]G. Heinmiller, "Rev. Daniel Weinberg Staffeld, A.M.," EM, July 12, 1920, p. 5. Supra, p. 205.

[3]Personal interview with J. R. Howe, January 10, 1966.

popularity throughout the denomination.[1]

The Fundamentalist Crusade

When the fundamentalist controversy reached its peak in the twenties, the Evangelical Association became less involved than United Evangelicals and United Brethren. Although Spreng was a tireless defender of the faith, neither he nor his editorial successors were sympathetic with the various interdenominational agencies of the fundamentalist crusade. Either he preferred a different brand of conservatism or else the years and his association with Gamertsfelder had taken their toll upon him. Reports of the activities of the most militant fundamentalists appeared in the church press--their break with the International Sunday School Lesson Committee in 1923, their conventions, and the antics of Gerald Winrod's Flying Defenders of Fundamentalism.[2] Approval of them, however, was not forthcoming. Leaders of the Evangelical Association advised their people not to take sides in the large-scale battle that was brewing. They regarded militant fundamentalism as an unsatisfactory answer to contemporary religious ills. One of Frye's editorials was a very pointed critique:

> The church in America has probably suffered as much harm from unbalanced friends as from avowed enemies. Many earnest, zealous leaders of religion want to convert folks not only to the religion of Jesus Christ but to their notions about the religion of Jesus. The Fundamentalists themselves observe sharp lines of division among them. . . . And some of the Fundamentalists in their zeal for their cause have departed, too, a long way from the fundamental spirit of Jesus.

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[1] See his address on evangelism before the United Brethren General Conference of 1913 (GCJUB, 1913, pp. 8-18). Also see his address before General Conference in 1925 (GCJUB, 1925, pp. 29-30). Although he was only sixty-five at the time, he retired from the active episcopate in 1917 in order to devote himself to such special interests as his assaults on liberalism.

[2] EM, June 30, 1923, p. 4; report of Sixth World's Fundamentalist Convention (EM, July 19, 1924, p. 4); EM, April 18, 1925, p. 4; and a news note about "Flying Defenders of Fundamentalism" (EM, April 9, 1927, p. 4).

> As long as Christendom endures in this world there will be difference of interpretation and viewpoint. Leaders of either school, liberal or conservative, who attempt to standardize religious convictions and then hurl anathemas upon the non-conformists are attempting to accomplish what nineteen centuries have proved impossible. Protestantism cannot deny its own fundamental, viz., that each soul is its own interpreter of God's will.
>
> Let us not subtract from the Gospel; neither let us add thereto. The fundamentals of salvation are sufficiently clear in the Bible. . . . The call still sounds for all followers of our Lord to be sober-minded."[1]

United Evangelicals became far more involved in the fundamentalist crusade. Their church paper carried advertisements of the tracts which gave the movement its name, and a selection from one of the tracts appeared in one issue.[2] Invitations to fundamentalist Bible Conferences and detailed reports thereof filled the pages of The Evangelical.[3] When William Bell Riley raised the threat of denominational division, which would separate the orthodox from the liberal in American churches, The Evangelical responded sympathetically.[4] Editor Hartzler was the leader of United Evangelicals who most devotedly supported the fundamentalist crusade. When an incurable illness led to his death in 1920, it was a blow from which the movement within the denomination did not recover.

The Rev. Charles G. Unangst of the Illinois Conference assumed responsibility for keeping the faithful informed about fundamentalist

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[1]Edwin G. Frye, "Fundamentalism," EM, July 17, 1922, p. 2. See Edwin G. Frye, "The Theological Ferment," EM, August 4, 1923, p. 2; Elmer R. Hart, "Christian Fundamentals--I. The Deity of Jesus," EM, August 11, 1923, pp. 8-9; Edwin G. Frye, "Anyhow, Here Is Accord," EM, January 26, 1924, p.3.

[2]TE, July 3, 1912, p. 421; Rev. John McNicol, "The Great Hope of the Church," TE, July 31, 1912, p. 483.

[3]"A Call for a Bible Conference on Christian Fundamentals," TE, April 9, 1919, p. 13; TE, June 25, 1919, pp. 10-11; TE, August 4, 1920, p. 7.

[4]H. B. Hartzler, "Is It Shadow of a 'Coming Event?'" TE, September 24, 1919, pp. 6-7.

activities.[1] When the Bible Institute of Los Angeles hosted the Fourth World's Conference of the Christian Fundamentals Association in 1922, Unangst was present and provided a detailed report for the church press. He was in full sympathy with the resolution of the conference to conduct an investigation into the orthodoxy of denominational missionaries in order "that no missionary funds be expended without careful investigation as to the loyalty of stations and missionaries to the Word of God."[2]

The last appearance of militant fundamentalist sentiment in the United Evangelical Church occurred just after the volcanic summer of 1922. Reacting to the events of that summer, the Ohio Conference adopted a doctrinal resolution to make clear its antagonism to theological liberalism. The text of the resolution appeared in the press; its affirmation of belief in the inerrancy of Scripture, the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ, the substitutionary theory of the atonement, and the personal return of Christ corresponded exactly to four of the famous five points of fundamentalism.[3] With the passing of Hartzler and the union of United Evangelicals with the Evangelical Association, the furor subsided.

United Brethren felt the attraction of the fundamentalist movement almost as much as United Evangelicals. They became involved when three fundamentalist leaders repudiated the Interchurch World Movement in 1920. United Brethren reacted, for their denomination had endorsed the movement

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[1]See Unangst's article which asserts that "Dr. W. B. Riley is entirely in accord with the position of our church when he declares that it embraces three things--an inerrant book, an infallible Christ, and a spiritual experience" ("Evangelical Christianity," TE, October 11, 1921, pp. 8-9).

[2]Charles G. Unangst, "'Scriptural Inspiration Versus Scientific Imagination,'" TE, August 29, 1922, p. 7.

[3]"Doctrinal Resolution," TE, September 26, 1922, p. 11.

and its program. Some United Brethren lined up on the side of James Gray, R. A. Torrey, and Dr. Charles G. Trumbull, the three fundamentalist leaders, and with the whole position they represented. Phillippi did not approve of all aspects of the Inter-church Movement--its support of institutional churches and their dances and pool tables--but he did want to avoid any "division in the Christian ranks." Not only is it "not probable that all which is right is on one side and all which is wrong is on the other side," but the denomination had made a commitment which it must honor.[1] After the doctrinal controversy surrounding the Fosdick sermon of 1922 Phillippi advised a middle-of-the-road position. He had "no liking at all for this so-called liberalism," but he could not "endorse the spirit of the extreme fundamentalist" because of the latter's "tendency to wholesale condemnation." He predicted that a "wide cleavage" in the Christian church was in prospect and urged his readers to seek an alternative:

> We are wondering again, as often in the past, if the United Brethren Church cannot set a godly example both in doctrine and in spirit. We wonder if it cannot remain true to the cardinal principles of the Christian faith, and maintain that spirit of love for all those who seem to differ. We believe that the United Brethren Church, as a whole, stands for this sort of thing. In case the trouble in other communions drives on to a split, we might lose a few ministers and laymen in either direction, yet we should hope to maintain our solidarity as a church, and that with respect for the doctrines which have built up our denomination, and also a state of mind which will win souls to Jesus Christ and to the cause for which he lived and died.[2]

Despite his announced editorial policy, Phillippi proceeded to follow a line which was obviously sympathetic to fundamentalists. His editorials

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[1] J. M. Phillippi, "Dividing Into Two Camps," RT, April 24, 1920, p. 4.

[2] J. M. Phillippi, "Contending for the Faith," RT, June 9, 1923, pp. 3-4. Winthrop Hudson asserts that the fundamentalist controversy was silenced by denominational politicians: "Theological discussion tended to be ruled out of bounds in the interest of united support for denominational programs, and there was a renewed emphasis upon 'disposition and conduct' as the only satisfactory test of religious faith" (American Protestantism, p. 149).

took their side, and he accepted and printed articles which staunchly defended their positions.[1]

In the summer of 1925 the nation turned its attention on Dayton, Tennessee.[2] During the course of the Scopes trial, which pitted fundamentalists against those whom they regarded as the foes of the Bible, United Brethren lined up on the conservative side. They had come to know William Jennings Bryan intimately through his appearances at their General Conferences. Such men as Bishop Weekley had kept the church informed about his activities and had applauded them.[3]

When the famous trial began, Editor Phillippi stated forthrightly his position:

> We favor upholding the Tennessee law for two reasons: First, the legislature had a right to pass it and the governor to sign it; second, judging from the alignment of forces since the law was passed, a check

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[1] J. M. Phillippi, "Back to Fundamentals," RT, July 31, 1920, p. 4; J. M. Phillippi, "Savior or Teacher," RT, June 23, 1923, p. 3; J. M. Phillippi, "Strange Fellowship," RT, June 23, 1923, p. 4; S. L. Baugher, Letter to the Editor, RT, August 11, 1923, p. 16; W. Lomax Childress, "What Liberalism Lacks," RT, January 24, 1925, pp. 6-7; W. Lomax Childress, "The Wave and the Rock," RT, September 26, 1925, p. 7. Phillippi noted that "the Baptist Bible union will advance fundamentalism to protect religious faith, and combat modernism. Dr. W. B. Riley naturally is one of the leaders. A big convention was held in Chicago the first week in November. They will follow the way William Jennings Bryan pointed, and should have much influence in stemming the tide of infidelity rising under the guise of modernism" (RT, November 21, 1925, p. 5).

[2] Phillippi had already given guarded approval to Tennessee's anti-evolution law (RT, April 4, 1925, pp. 4-5).

[3] In "Happy Over Seven Things" (RT, May 13, 1922, pp. 15-16) Weekley wrote: "I am mighty glad that Honorable W. J. Bryan still lives, and is being heard from almost daily. . . . 2. I am highly pleased to know that old Kentucky has been, and now is, thoroughly aroused over the teaching of Darwinism in her State schools, and the legislature came within a vote or two of putting a ban on the whole business. . . . 3. It is happifying to learn that the Governor of North Dakota, Mr. R. A. Nostos, had the courage in a recent address before the faculty and students of the State University, to pour shot and shell into those who teach Darwinism, rationalism, and other hurtful isms in the University, and other State schools."

> needs to be placed on the extreme liberalists, whose program is destructive of fundamental rights and fundamental liberties. It may be that the South will be the savior of Christian faith and Bible devotion.[1]

By "alignment of forces" Phillippi clearly meant the American Civil Liberties Union. Although he hesitated to defend the American Legion without qualification, "in a contest between it and the Civil Liberties Union, there is no place to hesitate."[2] When the heated contest was over and Bryan died shortly thereafter, Phillippi praised him as a revered Christian martyr:

> In a few years, when the orgy of unbelief represented by a godless evolution has become a matter of history, men will thank God for the fearless stand Mr. Bryan took for Christian life as opposed to theories--mere theories--blind and dumb theories--which would take the cross out of history and the crown from the head of every man. Mr. Bryan compelled the present so-called evolution to reveal its hand--a hand of destruction against all that the church holds sacred. For this alone he would be enshrined in grateful memory.[3]

What was at stake was not simply the theory of evolution, but its implications for the Christian doctrine of God. Conservatives at Dayton thought they saw the liberals using the doctrine of evolution as a means of removing the supernatural from everything. This would destroy the doctrine of the Virgin Birth, make Mary a woman of the street, and stamp Jesus as an illegitimate child. The whole affair at Dayton was "an open attack upon revealed religion and upon an authoritative and reliable Bible."[4] Although one article borrowed from the Dearborn Independent suggested that

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[1] J. M. Phillippi, "The Tennessee School Trial," RT, June 20, 1925, p. 3.

[2] Ibid.

[3] J. M. Phillippi, "Passing of the Commoner," RT, August 8, 1925, pp. 3-4.

[4] J. M. Phillippi, "The Most Deadly Foe," RT, August 8, 1925, pp. 4-5. Supra, p. 344.

"the Bible could have had a more learned defender,"[1] the predominant mood of the Telescope was fulsome praise for Bryan. Its attacks on the theory of evolution would have been worthy of the Commoner himself.[2]

When the Telescope held a popularity contest in 1926, the year after his death, readers chose Bryan's article, "Honoring the Book of Books," for first place. Down in thirtieth place was the "Deity of Christ" by Bishop A. R. Clippinger, who was probably the most liberal of the bishops.[3] Fundamentalism among United Brethren suffered severe and irrecoverable loss with the death of Bryan in 1925--and in the following year two of his staunchest supporters, Bishop Weekley and Editor J. M. Phillippi.

Conclusion

The fraternization with other fundamentalists that occurred in all three denominational groups (but particularly among United Evangelicals and United Brethren) is hardly a surprise. Three factors emerge as causes for the affinity they felt with the fundamentalist crusade. First, other Protestants who supported it were doing what Evangelicals and United Brethren had learned to do with theology--to engage in theological inquiry primarily for the purpose of defending the faith. Furthermore, this was no

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[1] "Significance of the Scopes Case," RT, August 29, 1925, p. 16.

[2] Dr. J. H. Snyder, "Religious Controversies," RT, July 18, 1925, pp. 8-9; Edwin Thomas Aldrich, "Materialistic and Theistic Evolution," RT, July 18, 1925, p. 14; editorial denunciation of Professor Henry F. Osborn's book, The Earth Speaks to Bryan, which allegedly had been written "to bolster up the Scopes side of the case in the Tennessee evolution trial" (RT, July 18, 1925, p. 24); RT, July 25, 1925, pp. 5, 24; Dr. J. J. Pershing, "Evolution--What It is, and is Not," RT, August 8, 1925, p. 6; W. M. Weekley employs the crassest literalism in interpreting the Bible as clearly contradicting evolution in "A Few Questions," RT, August 15, 1925, p. 9; Dr. Benjamin F. Daugherty, "Christ of the Bible and of Modern Thought," RT, January 9, 1926, p. 14.

[3] "The Telescope Contest," RT, October 2, 1926, pp. 3-4.

academic matter. In defending the emphasis on salvation through instantaneous conversion and a simplistic approach to the Bible they were doing far more than speaking out for abstract ideals of the Wesleyan tradition; they were defending the very pattern and substance of their denominational life.

Second, at the time that Evangelicals and United Brethren were developing theological skills and training, a majority of those religious leaders outside their denominations who were interested in serious and careful theological study were not liberals, but conservatives, many of whom lent their support to the fundamentalist movement. Feelings of kinship with them arose quite naturally. Furthermore, armed with the long-standing convictions that ideas precede action and that theological language is of such a nature that Christian doctrine requires no radical revision, Evangelicals and United Brethren were inclined to choose sides quickly. They tended to approach the fundamentalist-modernist controversy with an either/or attitude, looking for dichotomies--for right versus wrong.

A third factor was the theological isolation of United Evangelicals resulting from their lack of a theological seminary. This was an outcome of the church division of Evangelicals in 1891-94. Generally, they maintained an interest in theological education, but they lacked the contact with other institutions of theological study which might have softened their adamant conservatism.

Friendship with militant fundamentalists and sympathy with their ideas were not superficial. They diminished rapidly, however, even before the controversy was over. Denominational schisms produced by fundamentalism triggered a reaction, and Evangelical and United Brethren leaders diverted their people from supporting the crusade in the interest of denominational unity. The fundamentalism of the United Evangelicals was diluted

when they united with the Evangelical Association in 1922, and influential fundamentalist leaders both inside and outside the denominations were passing from the scene by the mid-twenties. Theological conservatism did not disappear, but the interest in militant, reactionary fundamentalism subsided sharply by the late twenties.

XV. ECUMENISM AND THE SOCIAL GOSPEL

Introduction

One of the most prominent features of twentieth-century Christianity has been the rise of the ecumenical movement, both among Protestants and Roman Catholics. This concern to realize more fully the essential oneness of the Christian church and to end or bridge unnecessary divisions among Christians affected and attracted both United Brethren and Evangelicals.

United Brethren had a long-standing tradition for fraternity with other Protestant groups. This extended all the way from the historic incident at Isaac Long's barn to their admirable and consistent cooperation with other denominations in twentieth-century world missions.[1]

Whatever may have been the motivating factors behind the general ecumenical movement, interest in it within these churches was not primarily the product of theological study and discussion. On the contrary, it was largely a byproduct of the recurring attitude which had prevailed in the early period of both denominations--the desire to avoid theological discussion whenever possible in order to discourage divisiveness and differences of opinion. According to this view, under peaceful circumstances the

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[1] See K. James Stein, "Church Unity Movements in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ Until 1946" (unpublished Th.D. dissertation, Union Theological Seminary, 1965). Stein tells his story in terms of the functioning of two themes of United Brethren ecumenicity. The efforts to cooperate and unite with like-minded denominations he calls the major theme. The minor theme consists of unitive relationships with denominations of totally different heritages. Sometimes, notes Stein, these themes complemented each other; sometimes they vividly competed.

church must not waste its time and energies on such theoretical matters as theological study, but rather should concentrate on converting the lost. Equipped with this understanding of the value and purpose of theological activity, Evangelicals and United Brethren became interested in the ecumenical movement. To the extent that they attempted to curtail theological discussion in order to maintain unity within their denominations--to this extent they were open to ecumenism.

Evangelicals, of course, had good reason for trying to maintain unity within their denomination, for they had just suffered a grievous split in the nineties that divided them by a three to two ratio. Therefore, the advice of the United Evangelical bishops in 1898 that "no differences of opinion . . . must be allowed to disturb the unity of the Spirit" is not surprising.[1] When the fundamentalist crusade was exerting its divisive influence upon many denominations in the twenties, Editor Ammon Hangen of The Evangelical urged his fellow-churchmen not to forget the bitter lessons they had learned from their own past:

> Our past is eloquent with exhortation to be carried about neither with the wind of doctrine that blows from where the shadow is taken for the substance, where off-shoots are regarded as part of the parent stock, nor from where the substance is lacking in essentials and where the main stock is too weak to stand the weather. "Mittel Maass, die beste Strass." Not too much, nor too little, but just enough--there we safely take our position. There is enough good water between them to justify avoiding both Scylla and Charybdis.[2]

Hangen did not accept the view that only one theological position was correct:

> Perfect agreement is a sign of mental indolence and atrophy. As long as men think, they will differ. There are those who think that no doxy

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[1] "Address of the Bishops," TE, October 11, 1898, p. 322.

[2] A. E. Hangen, "Avoiding Extremes," TE, August 15, 1922, pp. 4-5.

but theirs ought to be held by any man, but they mistake uniformity for unity and contend for that literalness which paralyzes and kills.[1]

Hangen counselled United Evangelicals to eschew both extreme fundamentalism and extreme liberalism, for the extremists turn the air "blue with epithets and characterizations which Christian brethren speak in the arrogance of learning and assumed scholarship and imaginary zeal for truth and self-righteousness and blind bigotry and a want of Christian charity, which is the worst heterodoxy."[2] United Evangelicals especially needed to maintain unity in 1922, for they were preparing to reunite with the Evangelical Association later that year.[3]

Voices within the Association also had been advising neutrality. Admonishing his readers to avoid both premillennialism and postmillennialism, Editor Bucks of the Messenger saw that the fervent espousal of either position could lead to serious divisions within the denomination.[4] The statistical progress of the denomination must not be impeded.[5]

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[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid.

[3] The Evangelical Congregational Church was formed by those United Evangelicals who did not enter the union in October, 1922.

[4] W. H. Bucks, "The Second Coming of Christ," EM, July 26, 1916, pp. 4-5.

[5] Sidney Mead's judgments about the relation of theology to American denominational life in The Lively Experiment, p. 114, are relevant here:

> "In relation to the voluntary principle Christianity itself tends to be conceived primarily as an activity, a movement, which the group is engaged in promoting. . . . Anything that seems to stand in the way of the effectiveness of such promotion is likely to be considered divisive, a threat to internal unity and group effectiveness. In this context, theology as an attempt to define and clarify intellectual positions inspires discussion, differences of opinion, even controversy, and hence is considered divisive. The strong tendency to dampen serious discussion of theological issues in most groups comes from just this attitude which strengthens the general anti-intellectual bias inherent in much of revivalistic pietism. This in turn helps to account for the surprising lack of interdenominational theological discussion, or even consciousness of theological distinctiveness among the many

The desire to soft-pedal theological differences clearly prevailed among the reunited Evangelicals after 1922. The Messenger asserted "that the spirit of Christian unity is much more to be desired than creedal accord."[1] The Lausanne Conference on Faith and Order in 1927 received applause for the agreements it reached, but a rebuke for failing to end the conference with fellowship around the Lord's table.[2] When President Kimmel of Evangelical Theological Seminary made his report to General Conference in 1926, he stated that the seminary had attempted to avoid theological controversy in order to maintain unity and "to be practical and aggressive in a new and perplexing age."[3] Kimmel was rejoicing

> that our church as a whole has profited by the folly and injury that has come to some of our larger sister denominations, by refusing to be drawn into any of the theological controversies of our day. We have refused to be divided. We have kept faithfully to our task of preaching and teaching a warm, practical, positive gospel that saves from sin and transforms human lives.[4]

United Brethren also had suffered intra-denominational strife, resulting in a minor division in 1889.[5] They too were happy for all signs which pointed to unity. In an extemporaneous response to the fraternal address of an Evangelical Lutheran at the United Brethren General Conference of 1897, Bishop Jonathan Weaver expressed his joy that the simplification of theological differences had resulted in greater unity among

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groups. 'Fundamentalism' in America was a movement that tried, among other things, to recall these denominations to theological and confessional self consciousness. It was defeated in the major denominations, not so much by theological discussion and debate as by effective political manipulations of denominational leaders to sterilize this new 'divisive' element."

[1] "A United Protestantism," EM, July 24, 1926, p. 3.

[2] "Why Stop With Symbol?" EM, October 8, 1927, p. 3.

[3] GCJEC, 1926, pp. 213-14. [4] Ibid. [5] Supra, p. 197.

Protestants.[1] Bishop J. W. Hott conceded that other denominations hold "the essential faith of Christianity" and that "denominationalism rests upon non-essentials."[2] Approving of the change in attitude toward Christian doctrine which he witnessed about him in the late nineties, Hott wrote:

> It is doubtful if creeds have the same force upon the churchly or individual mind that they did a while ago. The present tendency is toward allowing a wide diversity of theological belief in all the churches. While the essentials are held no less sacredly, it is difficult to make a force of any theological dogma. Christ and religion are exalted more than dogma. Christianity is becoming more a religion and less a theology.[3]

When the height of the fundamentalist controversy had passed, one minister commented thankfully: "Our ranks have not been divided perceptibly" over theology "as some of our sister churches."[4] They were not divided because enough men refused to let theology be an issue.

Premillennialism vs. postmillennialism was a question which could have been divisive for both Evangelicals and United Brethren. Instead of approaching it theologically, however, they ignored it or outflanked it.[5] Anton Huelster, who left the feuding Evangelicals to join the German Congregationalists at the time of church division in the nineties, might have offered a different approach, for he had been the ablest and best-trained theologian of the denomination during the decade prior to the rift. After the schism he continued to contribute articles both to The Evangelical and to

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[1] GCJUB, 1897, p. 286.

[2] J. W. Hott, "Basis of Denominationalism," QR, X (July, 1899), 194.

[3] Ibid., pp. 197-98.

[4] T. D. Spyker, "Our Heritage from the Fathers," RT, January 8, 1927, pp. 20-21.

[5] For instance, A. E. Hangen condemned those who have faith in the fundamentals and hope for the Second Coming of Christ, but no love ("The Greater Heresy," TE, June 21, 1921, p. 5). Cf. C. B. Boda, "Interpreting the Bible," RT, January 3, 1920, p. 6.

the Messenger. In one of these he does a theological and Biblical analysis of the Christian's millennial hope, finding Biblical and theological basis for both premillennialism and postmillennialism.[1] Huelster spoke from outside the denomination, however, and his was an isolated voice. Generally it seemed easier simply to gloss over the issues--to disregard them in the interests of Christian unity and charity.[2]

Cautious Interest in the Ecumenical Movement

Within both denominations there was considerable ambivalence toward the ecumenical movement. Sentiment in favor of it began to mount as both churches participated in the Federal Council of Churches. However, what ecumenism stood for and what it implied for denominationalism were not clear. Evangelicals and United Brethren resisted the notion that the Federal Council was a judgment on the sinfulness of denominationalism. They concurred with the sentiment of Phillippi's more liberal successor in the editorial chair of the Telescope, W. E. Snyder: "We are not as horror-stricken at the 'sinfulness' of the 'divisions' of Protestantism as some people profess to be. In fact, we are not ready to pronounce them sinful at all."[3]

Of the three denominational groups, the United Evangelicals were the

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[1]Anton Huelster, "Is There Much Difference Between the Two?" EM, December 24, 1919, pp. 5-6.

[2]A. E. Hangen's editorial, "The Second Coming from a Mediating Angle," is an exception (TE, June 21, 1921, pp. 4-5).

[3]W. E. Snyder, "The Question of Union," RT, October 26, 1929, p. 5. Evangelicals expressed themselves favorably on this statement in H. Paul Douglass's study: "Denominations are natural reflections of permanent differences in human nature and temperament, whose perpetuation in the church is not un-Christian" (pp. 290-92). Cf. W. M. Stanford, "More About That Great Council," TE, December 16, 1908, p. 808.

most resistant to ecumenism because of their participation in the fundamentalist crusade. When the Federal Council of Churches was organized in 1908, Editor W. M. Stanford of The Evangelical was willing to report its meetings, but he adopted a non-committal position from which he diverged only slightly.[1] In 1919 Dr. James M. Gray of Moody Bible Institute explained to United Evangelicals that the church union efforts being made by three Protestant Episcopal bishops who were seeking a conference with representatives of Russian, Greek, and Roman Catholic Churches were a sign that the advent of the anti-christ was just around the corner.[2] When the fundamentalist leader, William Bell Riley, said that before church union was possible there would have to be divisions within denominations separating the orthodox from the liberal, United Evangelicals listened sympathetically.[3] With this counsel, they did not prepare for reunion with the Evangelical Association with perfect unanimity. The Rev. Charles G. Unangst was especially apprehensive. He declared that denominational leaders had ignored "the requirements of Biblical reconciliation." He candidly asserted that

> if the principals responsible for the division, and many of them are still living, would yield, fully, to the Holy Spirit, they would almost

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[1] TE, November 25, 1908, p. 760; W. M. Stanford, "That Great Council," TE, December 9, 1908, pp. 792-93; W. M. Stanford, "More About That Great Council," TE, December 16, 1908, p. 808.

[2] See the synopsis of Gray's address, "The Proposed World Church Union--Is It of God, or Man?" in TE, May 7, 1919, pp. 4-5. Gray wrote: "Here we may see prophecy in process of fulfillment, for not only is a league of nations revealed in prophecy whose head is designated as a secular despot, but side by side with him is an ecclesiastical head who exercises his authority" (ibid.).

[3] H. B. Hartzler, "Is It Shadow of a 'Coming Event?'" TE, September 24, 1919, pp. 6-7. Hartzler turned thumbs-down on the liberal-oriented Interchurch World Movement ("Our Church and the Interchurch World Movement," TE, December 24, 1919, pp. 6-7).

> vie with each other in assuming the blame for the disruption. Hearts sadly estranged would be melted; tears would flow freely; and confessions and petitions for forgiveness would be the order of the day. There would be a Pentecost throughout all of our borders.[1]

Nevertheless, ecumenism made progress even among United Evangelicals. In 1910 William H. Fouke, who rose to the bishopric later that year, attended the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh.[2] Editor Hangen of The Evangelical was another supporter. When the fundamentalist controversy threatened to divide other Protestant denominations in the twenties, he wrote a forthright editorial in which he deplored such divisiveness:

> But we protest against such divisiveness, the divisiveness which shows the lines clearly, sharply drawn. . . . Fundamentalism and liberalism are doctrinal attitudes. There is a deeper fundamental than the doctrinal, and there is a deeper freedom than to cast off all doctrinal restraint--Jesus expressed it in his prayer, "that they also may be one in us," and Paul characterized it as the "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."[3]

Within the Evangelical Association (and in the Evangelical Church after 1922) greater unanimity prevailed. When the Federal Council of Churches was formed in 1908 Editor Bucks of the Messenger was openly favorable.[4] His successor, Edwin Frye, defended the Council against the attacks of its critics and was its consistent booster.[5] When William Bell Riley assailed the Federal Council as an agency of modernism, Frye rose to its

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[1]Charles G. Unangst, "The Impracticableness of Union with Reference to the Spirit, Genius, History and Method of the Two Churches," TE, December 27, 1921, pp. 9-10.

[2]W. H. Fouke, "A Trip to Edinburgh, Scotland," TE, June 29, 1910, pp. 406-407.

[3]A. E. Hangen, "In the Name of the Unity of the Church of Christ," TE, August 29, 1922, p. 5.

[4]W. H. Bucks, "The Federate Council of Churches," EM, January 13, 1909, p. 4.

[5]Edwin G. Frye, "Federal Council of Churches," EM, December 20, 1924, pp. 2-3.

defense:

> We give it as our opinion that he would have a hard time proving the claim of the Federal Council being an agency of Modernism. Protestantism needs such a voice as the Federal Council of Churches, and if there are any defects in its organization or any misfits in leadership the churches should remove them. But the organization itself should be maintained.[1]

With men like Frye and John S. Stamm, who later served as president of the Federal Council of Churches, in places of leadership, Evangelicals developed a warm interest in the ecumenical movement.

United Brethren were not unfriendly to the ecumenical movement in its earlier years,[2] but interest markedly accelerated in the twenties when several prominent United Brethren took an active part in it. One of these was Bishop C. J. Kephart, who worked on the Commission on International Justice and Goodwill of the Federal Council.[3] Another supporter was Bishop William M. Bell, the contribution of United Brethren to the social gospel movement. He widely propagated his views through his lectures and his writings.[4] The ecumenical movement made great headway among United Brethren in the late twenties after the fundamentalist crusade had subsided.

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[1] Edwin G. Frye, "Dr. Riley Assails Federal Council of Churches," EM, May 14, 1927, p. 4. Cf. Edwin G. Frye, "The Place of the Highest Harmony," EM, July 3, 1926, p. 3.

[2] J. M. Phillippi, "Federal Council," RT, December 18, 1912, pp. 4-5; J. M. Phillippi, "Dividing Into Two Camps," RT, April 24, 1920, p. 4.

[3] C. J. Kephart, "'Good Will,'" RT, March 15, 1924, p. 7. Bishop A. R. Clippinger delivered an address at the meeting of the Federal Council in 1924 (W. R. Funk, "Federal Council Meeting," RT, December 27, 1924, pp. 10-11). See H. H. Baish, "Federal Council Meeting," RT, February 25, 1928, pp. 7-8.

[4] See chapter iv, "Cooperation in the Christianization of America," especially p. 35, in Bell's Torches Aloft.

Ethics and the Social Gospel Movement

Two characteristics of Evangelicals and United Brethren provided the basis for the development of ecumenism among them: their ethical orientation and their commitment to revivalism. From the beginning these two concerns had been integral to the life of both denominations.

The first of these, the ethical preoccupation, was ever prominent, providing sympathetic nourishment for the social gospel movement, which was one of the chief reasons for the formation of the Federal Council of Churches. From the early days of both churches the transformation of character had been a prime goal. Frequently they judged doctrinal deviation, infidelity, and heresy as much on the basis of their effect in producing moral degeneracy as on theological grounds. A rule of thumb they followed was that heresy of head and of conduct generally go together, with the latter often the worse variety.[1]

This linking of immorality and doctrinal deviation was a part of the mental furniture of two men who had a large part to play in the ideological development of their churches, S. P. Spreng of the Evangelicals and J. M. Phillippi of the United Brethren. Spreng once wrote: "Infidelity and immorality are practically synonymous."[2] And Phillippi concluded that he had penetrated to the heart of modernism when he found its basis to be "the refusal of the heart to abide by the principles of the holiest life."[3] Devout believers should fear liberalism, evolution, and all modern trends in

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[1] W. E. Snyder, "Heretical Conduct," RT, January 1, 1927, pp. 4-5.

[2] S. P. Spreng, "Infidelity: Its Nature, Causes, and Cure," EM, February 2, 1898, p. 72. See S. P. Spreng, "The Case of Dr. Briggs," EM, May 17, 1899, pp. 312-13.

[3] J. M. Phillippi, "Ground of Modernism!" RT, March 20, 1926, pp. 4-5.

theology primarily because of their deleterious effects upon character.[1]

Some church leaders affirmed publicly that the truth and value of any Christian doctrine depended upon its effect on character.[2] The Rev. Charles A. Mock asserted that

> an orthodoxy that stands impotent before those who need healing is worthless and no better than a heresy. Indeed a "heresy" that has in it nothing more than a humanitarianism with a gospel of "social service," is better than an "orthodoxy" that is powerless to help the multitudes in their spiritual needs and which does not possess even a program of social service.[3]

Bishop Bell, the United Brethren leader, concurred with this estimation of "humanitarianism" which placed it above theological forms. "To exhaust human interest and energy on valueless theological speculations and discussions" was "a trick of the evil one." These too easily became "a substitute for interest in, and a sense of responsibility for, human welfare here and now."[4] At the United Brethren General Conference of 1925 Bell delivered an eloquent memorial address for his departed brethren in which he based his affirmations about immortality squarely upon the "whole

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[1]"A Man Who Tried Both Sides," TE, May 6, 1891, p. 139; "Principles, Polity and Faith of the United Evangelical Church," TE, April 24, 1895, p. 129; "A Catechism for the Infidel," TE, January 12, 1898, p. 9; W. M. Stanford, Dedicatory Address, TE, October 21, 1901, pp. 330-31; W. M. Stanford, Fraternal Address before the General Conference of the United Brethren in Christ, TE, June 7, 1905, pp. 360-61; F. L. Snyder, "Liberalism Dangerous to Character," EM, May 15, 1894, p. 306; S. P. Spreng, "The Fruit of Infidelity," EM, September 4, 1894, p. 568; Joseph H. Ablett, "Degeneration vs. Evolution," EM, July 17, 1895, p. 450; S. P. Spreng, "The Sterility of Infidelity," EM, December 14, 1898, p. 792.

[2]See an editorial note in RT, May 20, 1891, p. 305; Fay M. Bowman, "Divine Christ--Supreme Authority," RT, January 22, 1927, p. 6.

[3]Charles A. Mock, "Credentials of a True Orthodoxy--Second, Where May Its Credentials Be Found?" EM, April 2, 1927, pp. 10-12.

[4]Bell, Torches Aloft, p. 173. Cf. editorial notes in RT, August 26, 1891, p. 529.

moral struggle" of man.[1]

The ethical ardor of Evangelicals and United Brethren had become an honored part of their tradition. Bishop John Stamm treated it in his Master's thesis written at the University of Chicago in 1926, the same year Evangelicals elected him to the episcopate. His thesis was that "the passion for ethical and spiritual religion . . . is the heart of the doctrinal consciousness" of the Evangelical Church.[2] Stamm took a long look at the statement of Jacob Albright, the founder of the Evangelical Church, about his motivation for beginning to preach: "God, my helper and protector, also strengthened my own heart and mind by his grace, that I was not only able to preach pure doctrine to those whom He had entrusted to me, but also to establish them by my own example."[3] Stamm concluded that by "pure doctrine" Albright did not mean "philosophical or speculative" truths, but ethical verities. He meant "pure living" according to the Scriptures, for he and the other founders of the denomination "did not think of Christianity as primarily a system of doctrines and beliefs, but as an ethical and spiritual force."[4] With considerable historical understanding Stamm wrote:

> This church did not originate as a protest against some theological doctrine, but as a protest against the low moral and spiritual standards of their times, especially as exemplified in the lives of many who

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[1] GCJUB, 1925, pp. 23-27. The negative reaction of many United Brethren to the New Theology is traceable in part to their principle that any change in theology which takes sin less seriously is to be deplored. See G. P. Macklin, "Downgrade Theology--Sin and Its Consequences," RT, July 1, 1891, p. 404. Also see the report of President Funkhouser's baccalaureate sermon at Lebanon Valley College; it was entitled "The Saving Power of Good Habits" (RT, June 26, 1907, p. 16). W. O. Fries preached the baccalaureate sermon at Shenandoah Collegiate Institute on "The Art of Character-Building" (RT, June 13, 1917, p. 15).

John S. Stamm, "The Doctrinal Teaching of the Evangelical Church" (unpublished Master's dissertation, Dept. of Systematic Theology in the Graduate Divinity School, University of Chicago, 1926), p. ii.

[3] Ibid., p. 2. [4] Ibid.

> professed to be Christians. Jacob Albright did not begin his evangelistic efforts to organize a new church founded upon some new theological theory or doctrine, but as an effort to re-establish vital Godliness. . . . There seems nothing, therefore, in the initial movements which led to the organization of this church to indicate that "pure doctrine" means "pure theology." When Jacob Albright used this expression he used it ethically and not theologically. He believed that he was preaching "pure doctrine" when he emphasized the ethical and spiritual content of Christianity. He believed people were true to "pure doctrine" when they lived so truly Christian that the principles of Jesus and the Apostles were being exemplified in their thought and conduct. This initial emphasis is the key to the doctrinal consciousness of the Evangelical Church. Her doctrinal interests have always been in the field of the ethical rather than the theological.[1]

For Albright and his associates "the test of true doctrine was not creedal statements and official pronouncements, but righteousness of heart and holiness of life;" if any doctrine "failed to produce Christlike character," it was "either faulty, or wrongly used."[2] Although Stamm made his point by analyzing Jacob Albright, the practical, ethical orientation of the denomination obviously persisted throughout its history.

This stance provided a predisposition to be receptive to the social gospel movement. Even among United Evangelicals, who were least attracted to it, some felt its power and responded. The Rev. W. F. Heil, who was generally conservative on other issues, was sympathetic--at least in his younger days. Criticizing the clichés about the laboring class being lazy, he urged that in the program of the church "the proclamation of the economic side of the gospel should be secondary only to salvation of the soul, and should be reiterated with such earnestness as to change the current of thought and action of men who today are members of the Christian church and have it in their power to determine the legislation of this country."[3]

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[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid., p. 10.

[3] W. F. Heil, "The Duty of the Church Toward the Laboring Classes," TE, May 20, 1896, p. 161. Heil served three terms as bishop of the United Evangelicals, leading a group of them to form the Evangelical Congregational

However, the only prominent leader who gave consistent support was Charles A. Mock. A series of articles which appeared in The Evangelical (surprisingly enough, under the editorship of H. B. Hartzler) show that Mock was so receptive to the movement that it had modified his theology:

> We shall find that brotherhood is the key-word to all the social teachings of Jesus. The more I study the teachings of Jesus the more I am coming to test my understanding of them by that central idea of all his teaching, namely, that of the divine Fatherhood. I will remove from my theology every idea and conception that I find incongruous with the highest and best meaning of the word Father. From that I will take my theological bearings, and to it I will constantly return to correct my readings from the variable and uncertain compass of the intellect. When this poor, imperfect reason of mine lays hold upon an idea that seems to be a valuable acquisition to my religious thinking, I will carry that idea direct to point of departure and test it by the idea of the divine Fatherhood, and if it fails by that test, I will discard it, no matter how plausible or logical it may seem. Just so I conceive brotherhood, the correlative of divine Fatherhood, to be the standard by which all our interpretations of the social teachings of Jesus should be tested and corrected. It is surprising how quickly these teachings of the Master reduce themselves to a unity when viewed in the light of brotherly love. All of them center here.[1]

Apart from Mock few United Evangelicals became enamored with the new social Christianity.[2]

Although S. P. Spreng had some slight interest in "Christian socialism," he carried no torch for the social gospel, and little evidence of it in the Evangelical Association appeared until after the reunion with United

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Church in 1922, when the majority of United Evangelicals rejoined the Evangelical Association.

[1]Charles A. Mock, "The Social Teachings of Jesus," TE, April 3, 1912, p. 210.

[2]See the report of the Perkasie Park Normal Assembly which carried the announcement that the Rev. W. H. Medlar of Wabasha, Minnesota, would be lecturing on the "Relation of the Bible to the Social Problem" (TE, July 11, 1894, p. 220); Isaac P. Merkel, "The Question of Socialism," TE, December 27, 1898, p. 413; W. J. Dice, "The Place of the Pulpit in National Issues," TE, March 20, 1918, pp. 8-9.

Evangelicals in 1922.[1] Even then there was no groundswell of enthusiasm for it. The editor of the Messenger during the twenties, Edwin Frye, had some fears that radicals might interpret the Gospel only in social terms, but he was generally favorable and open to the thrust of the movement.[2] Frye was interested enough in the "Christianizing of society" to carry several articles by an Evangelical pastor in Chicago, the Rev. J. Alfred Nansen, who was a strong promoter of the social gospel movement and an active participant in this form of ministry. Nansen decried the fighting over creeds and advised that "Christianity would be materially strengthened if all Christians would forget creedal differences and join forces for fighting unrighteousness and injustice as it is practiced in every department of human activity."[3] Apart from Nansen there was little evidence that congregations were adapting their patterns of church life in order to minister to the great social needs of the day. Most Evangelicals were satisfied with a conventional and rhetorical acceptance of the social dimensions of the church's task.[4]

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[1]S. P. Spreng, "Christian Socialism," EM, December 7, 1898, p. 776; "The World to Be Redeemed," EM, December 9, 1896, p. 786, carried a long quotation from Dr. George D. Herron's book, The Larger Christ.

[2]Edwin G. Frye, "What Is Meant?" EM, March 22, 1924, p. 3. See Edwin G. Frye, "The Fundamental Message Changes Not," EM, November 1, 1924, p. 3.

[3]J. Alfred Nansen, "What Is Christianity?" EM, March 8, 1924, p. 7. See J. Alfred Nansen, "The Church Ministering to Industrial Reconstruction," EM, January 12, 1929, pp. 7-9; M. E. Oeschger, "The Reconstruction of Religion," EM, March 22, 1924, pp. 6-8.

[4]William H. Heinmiller, professor of sociology at North Central College, shows appreciation of the church's responsibility in the face of social issues in his advocacy of patience with radicals who have social theories which do not conform to the old ways ("New Wine in Old Bottles," EM, September 25, 1926, pp. 6-7). Heinmiller advised that men should "beware lest we crucify those who may be our best leaders and persecute those who stand nearer to the heart of the Christian message than we do! Let us beware lest we put new wine into old wineskins. And by the way, are we

United Brethren Espouse the Social Gospel

The response to the social gospel movement among United Brethren, however, was far different. One after another of the leaders of the denomination felt its magnetism and gave it his interest and allegiance. The first to do so was Bishop J. S. Mills. In his writings and in his public utterances he took up the themes which are now so familiar: the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, the Kingdom of God understood as a gradually developing social order based on the spirit of Christ, and the condemnation of unrestrained capitalism.[1] Mills was extremely sensitive to the great social evils of his day and applauded the formation of the Federal Council of Churches because it gave promise of dealing with the ills of society.[2] He became convinced that Christianity and socialism were compatible, delivering a sermon at Union Biblical Seminary in 1891 on "The Kingdom of God, the True Socialism."[3]

Mills' influence helped to make the Quarterly Review an agent of the social gospel movement. In it he promulgated his views by writing commendatory book reviews on new writings of the movement.[4] Advocating that the minister study sociology as zealously as theology, Mills praised the relatively new discipline as "applied Christianity."[5] The Quarterly Review also welcomed the expressions of other United Brethren who believed that

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brave enough to be radical?" See J. W. Heininger, "Could the 'Profit Motive' Stand Regeneration?" EM, September 7, 1929, p. 6. Heininger was a prominent minister in Ohio; his son is presently a bishop of the Evangelical United Brethren Church.

[1] Funk, p. 223. [2] Ibid., pp. 247-51. [3] Ibid., pp. 220, 223.

[4] J. S. Mills, Review of Social Evolution, by Benjamin Kidd, QR, VI (January, 1895), 92. J. S. Mills, "Sociology," QR, VI (October, 1895), 348.

[5] J. S. Mills, "Sociology," QR, VII (January, 1896), 88.

the church was called upon to play an active role in the face of the current social problems. One of them, the Rev. G. M. Mathews, who later became a bishop, asserted that "the church that has become so tyrannized and dominated by wealth, social prestige, or political influence that it dare not 'cry aloud and spare not' against all forms of lawlessness and unrighteousness, may well doubt as to its qualifications to fulfill its mission as the 'light of the world' and the 'salt of the earth.'"[1] Richard T. Ely, a well-known economist and aggressive advocate of the social gospel, also contributed to the Review.[2] One writer advocated quite radical modification of the existing economic system:

> The best economic institutions in all governments, and the only ones that are Christian, are those that are based upon the Pentecost Christian principle of distribution according to the needs of the beneficiaries. Such are the postoffice, police power, sanitary systems, and public schools, and the prosperity of nations is measured by the degree to which such institutions are fostered, and not by the stock exchange, and no effective argument can be made against extending the application of this principle until it includes in its operations our entire social, commercial, and business life. . . .
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> Our present system of commerce and industry is nothing but the kingdom of Mammon, and its collapse seems to be fitly prophesied in the latter part of the eighteenth chapter of Revelation.[3]

One of the products of the social gospel movement was the "institutional church." It was the attempt to reorganize the life of a parish so

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[1]G. M. Mathews, "The Church and the Times," QR, III (July, 1892), 201. Cf. W. C. Day, "Christianity and Social Evolution," QR, IV (April, 1893), 122-34.

[2]Richard T. Ely, "Christianity as a Social Force," QR, V (January, 1894), 66-73. Many Evangelicals and United Brethren heard Ely at Lake Chautauqua, where he was a frequent lecturer. See Harry P. Harrison, Culture Under Canvass (New York: Hastings House, 1958).

[3]George McA. Miller, "The Economics of Jesus," QR, IX (October, 1898), 297-99. See also W. F. Berger, "Present Status of the Protestant Church," QR, V (October, 1894), 335-47. A reviewer of Washington Gladden's The New Idolatry comments that "this writer gives us nothing that is not worth reading, and this book is no exception to the rule" (QR, XVII [May-June, 1906], 191).

that its ministry would include far more than evangelistic efforts to convert sinners--gymnasiums, social welfare, community service of various sorts. No wholesale adoption of this plan for church life occurred among United Brethren. Nor could there be, for it was a plan primarily designed for the urban church, and in 1906 ninety-two per cent of United Brethren churches were rural.[1] However, several isolated flickers of interest did appear. The Rev. L. F. John, who served for a time as chaplain at Lebanon Valley College, gave it his support.[2] The Rev. J. A. Eby, a pastor in Dayton, Ohio, also expressed his approval, confessing that "in the church of which I happen to be the present pastor features of the institutional church are being added as rapidly as possible, and by proper use of these means we hope as a congregation to greatly increase our ability to do the work committed unto us by our Heavenly Father."[3] In the Telescope appeared a picture of Weaver Memorial Church in Chicago which had just added two large Bible classrooms and a gymnasium;[4] Weaver Church wanted to save "the whole man."

In the fall of 1894 United Brethren first encountered the ideas of George Herron, vigorous crusader for Christian Socialism and Professor of Applied Christianity at Iowa College (later Grinnell College). When he gave a series of lectures in Dayton,[5] Editor I. L. Kephart became dubious

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[1]H. R. Niebuhr, Social Sources of Denominationalism (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1929), p. 183.

[2]L. F. John, "Applied Christianity," QR, V (July, 1894), 203-214.

[3]J. A. Eby, "The Institutional Church," QR, VII (April, 1896), 149.

[4]RT, January 27, 1909, p. 27; RT, February 17, 1909, p. 17.

[5]RT, November 21, 1894, pp. 738-39. See George D. Herron, "Education and Society," RT, February 13, 1895, p. 100. The wider church learned of his views through a seminary professor's review of one of Herron's books

about Herron's apparent neglect of individual salvation and carried on a correspondence with him about it. Herron blithely reassured him that he was interested in the salvation of the individual as well as the regeneration of society.[1]

Kephart willingly brought the Telescope into sympathy with the efforts of Protestants for social improvement. When Henry George died in 1897, Kephart called his death "tragic."[2] In 1898 he published a whole series of articles on the theme of "Christianity and the Social Crisis."[3] A picture of Jane Addams of Hull House fame adorned the front page of one issue.[4] Shortly before his death in 1908 Kephart was advocating that the church take an active part in politics: "The mission of the church necessarily compels it to take a hand in the directing of public thought of taxations, of tariff, of trusts, of commerce, governmental polity in general, of temperance."[5]

Bishop William M. Bell (bishop from 1905 to 1929) probably was the most active supporter of the social gospel among United Brethren. Not only

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that appeared in the Quarterly Review (J. P. Landis, Review of The New Redemption, by George Herron, QR, V [July, 1894], 190-91).

[1] I. L. Kephart, "Professor Herron and His Critics," RT, June 26, 1895, pp. 401-402.

[2] I. L. Kephart, "Death of Henry George," RT, November 3, 1897, p. 1380. Henry George was one of the first to point to the social ills of America, particularly in his Progress and Poverty in 1879. He had an important influence on Walter Rauschenbusch and other leaders of the social gospel movement.

[3] T. A. Johnson, "The Preacher in Society," RT, February 23, 1898, pp. 232-33. In "The Church and Society," RT, November 2, 1898, pp. 1378-1379, I. L. Kephart contends that the church must actively try to regenerate society as well as individuals.

[4] RT, January 8, 1908, p. 1.

[5] I. L. Kephart, "Christianity and Our Brother's Needs," RT, May 27, 1908, p. 4.

did his ideas for the redemption of society appear clearly in several books he wrote,[1] but he also spread the new gospel by means of his innumerable public appearances. Bell was calling for a "correction of all false and malignant individualism" that would "guarantee a new sense of social responsibility."[2] Although he affirmed that the kingdom of God was both a present reality and a future consummation, he expected that consummation to occur within human society as we know it here:

> The kingdom of God, then, is on the earth. Its reign is not, as yet, universal; its extension is the duty of every enlightened and purified mind. . . . When the kingdom of God shall pervade the whole social order, with its refinements, its heavenly dispositions, its brotherly kindnesses, the social order will be glorious indeed.[3]

Bell believed that the social crisis facing the American church was the one important issue for the church of his day. If it could react responsibly to this test, he thought it "reasonable to expect that it [Christianity] will become speedily the one religion for all men."[4] Bell openly favored a radical revision of the economic order of his day. "God never intended," he wrote, "the oppressive ownership of wealth by the few."[5] In fact, "Christ made it very clear that riches are not only undesirable but the positive occasion of guilt." Bell called it the state's duty to "assert the right to limit the individual fortune and compel the vast individual wealth of the world to yield in a sane way to such methods as will insure a more equitable distribution."[6] He concluded that there was nothing inherently anti-God about the "religion of socialism."[7]

Bell and Mills were undoubtedly responsible for much of what happened

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[1] See Bell's Torches Aloft and The Social Message of Our Lord.

[2] Bell, The Social Message of Our Lord, p. 9. [3] Ibid., p. 87.

[4] Ibid., p. 65. [5] Ibid., pp. 126-27. [6] Ibid., pp. 7-8.

[7] Ibid., p. 16.

at the 1909 session of General Conference. Far more than any preceding or succeeding United Brethren General Conference, this one was intensely aware of the social gospel. In fact, the record reads like that of a social gospel convention. The bishops' opening address recognized "the social crisis of this age" and included a statement approved by the Federal Council of Churches on industrial toilers. When the bishops urged that "the church should not be behind the State in condemning and seeking to remedy all monopolies as contrary to social welfare"--that the church "should seek to correct all unfairness and injustice in the making or using of wealth and seek to establish the Golden Rule as the rule of social life," the conference delegates responded with applause.[1] The Committee on the Church and Modern Industry offered this recommendation: "That our pulpit and press keep faithfully instructing the people in the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the binding force of the command, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,' the Golden Rule, and the precepts which require men to esteem others better than themselves, and in honor to prefer one another."[2] When the committee gave its report, Bishop Bell spoke exuberantly in favor of the Committee's recommendations: "In this twentieth century, by these social requirements, they will Christianize our politics, Christianize our money, Christianize our education, Christianize our government, and introduce the reign of Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords."[3] Again the conference responded with applause. William Jennings Bryan also appeared, giving an address entirely devoted to social issues--corruption in business and the evils of monopolies and the church's responsibility. When he came to the platform to speak, the audience arose and waved

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[1] GCJUB, 1909, pp. 21-24. [2] Ibid., p. 398. [3] Ibid., p. 402.

handkerchiefs to greet him.[1]

The 1909 General Conference took concrete steps to carry out their social ideas. To the study course for ministers they added Washington Gladden's The Christian Pastor, Richard Ely's Social Aspects of Christianity and his Political Economy, and Walter Rauschenbusch's Christianity and the Social Crisis, which had made such an impact when it appeared in 1907.[2] Before long the spirit of the Conference began to fade, however, for Bishop Mills died within a month, and Editor Kephart, who also was in sympathy with the social gospel movement, had died six months before. Interest in social issues continued, but it did not flower into a denomination-wide dedication to the goals of the social gospel movement.

Two other leaders who kept alive an interest in the social gospel were Dr. J. P. Landis, professor at Union Biblical Seminary, and Cyrus J. Kephart, who served as bishop from 1913 to 1925. Landis had the same optimism as many others in the social gospel movement about the imminence of the Kingdom's arrival in its fulness. He could envision the perfect society, which was really the present society with all its social sins removed:

> When men love God with all the heart, and their neighbors as themselves; when men do unto others as they would that others should do to them; when men esteem others as better than themselves; when they in honor prefer one another, then will the kingdom of God be established in the hearts of individual men and in society, then will the hurtful inequalities be done away; there will be no greedy, devouring monopolies, no voracious, soulless corporations, no demoniacal liquor traffic, no high-handed gambling in the open-markets, and organized robbery of the public; the divorce dockets will be empty, the sweat-shops closed, unjust discriminations as to remuneration of the labor of women will be ended, graft in the public servants will be defunct, some form

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[1] Ibid., pp. 120-129.

[2] Ibid., p. 809. Rauschenbusch's book was added to the Evangelical Association's Course of Study in 1911. This was not the first appearance of an interest in social concerns, though, for Christianity and the Social Crisis merely took the place of Shailer Mathews' The Church and Changing Order on the list (EM, October 25, 1911, p. 12).

> of equitable cooperation in industry will be devised, justice will prevail, righteousness rule, and the burdens of suffering men, women, and children lightened, the heart of the Lord and Father of us all gladdened, and the blessings of rejoicing heaven flood the earth.[1]

Bishop C. J. Kephart was more restrained in his Christianity and the Social Weal, which appeared in 1914. He did say that "he who does not yield his life up to genuine, loving, helpful, social service does not live the truly spiritual life," if the life of Jesus is to be taken as a guide.[2] However, no form of socialism got support from him.[3] Living through the entire fundamentalist controversy, Kephart maintained an interest both in correct doctrine (He was sympathetic to the fundamentalist crusade.) and in the church's responsibility to alleviate the social evils of the day.

Another leader who tried to preserve this uneasy alliance between the concerns of fundamentalism and the social gospel movement was J. M. Phillippi, editor of the Telescope from 1908 to 1926. He was by no means a social crusader, but he did not turn his back on this challenge to the churches. In 1912 Phillippi invited the Reverend Charles Stelzle to discuss the social responsibility of the church in the Telescope.[4] Stelzle had only recently founded Labor Temple on New York's East Side as an attempt to bring Christian principles to bear upon social problems there. In 1903 he had headed the Presbyterians' new Department of Church and Labor. Later, during World War I Phillippi wrote an editorial which dealt with ways in which the nation should treat the expected flood of immigrants

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[1] J. P. Landis, "Gospel Message," RT, July 6, 1910, pp. 7-8. See J. P. Landis, "The Present Crisis," RT, June 8, 1910, pp. 7-8.

[2] C. J. Kephart, Christianity and the Social Weal (Dayton, Ohio: The Otterbein Press, 1914), p. 201.

[3] Ibid., p. 96.

[4] Charles Stelzle, "As A Social Agency," RT, November 13, 1912, pp. 9-10.

after the war. He had no large-scale program to suggest, but his attitude toward this social need indicates that he had heard and heeded the preachments of the social gospel.[1]

In 1922 Bishop Weekley, the United Brethren crusader against liberalism, engaged in battle with a fellow churchman, Albert S. Keister, of the University of Chicago, over the use of certain questionable textbooks in college classrooms.[2] The Telescope carried the contest, and Phillippi openly sided with Keister.[3] Although his preference for Keister was on the specific issue of freedom with regard to college textbooks, Phillippi could not have overlooked his obvious devotion to the social gospel. Wrote Keister:

> The Savior's heart was torn by the social and economic oppression of his time; his wonderful love for humanity caused him to work unceasingly to relieve suffering, fight tyranny, combat the vested evil interests. He thought of these things as "doing the will of the Father." Why cannot the United Brethren Church think and talk less about doctrines and more about the suffering, the tyranny, and the vested evil interests of our day?[4]

On other occasions, however, Phillippi warned against devoting oneself entirely to the social gospel to the neglect of ministry to individuals:

> The chief danger is slipping over individual sin as inconsistent with modern ideas, and slipping over individual salvation as a worn-out doctrine of old-time superstition. And this implies much. We do not hold that the social service workers count sin out, and pardon out, and God out, and fellowship with heaven out, but that is the tendency.[5]

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[1] J. M. Phillippi, "The Church and the Immigrant," RT, December 8, 1915, pp. 3-4.

[2] Two that Weekley mentions are Burton and Mathews' The Life of Christ and Bailey and Kent's History of the Hebrew Commonwealth.

[3] J. M. Phillippi, "College Texts," RT, February 4, 1922, p. 4.

[4] Albert S. Keister, "College Teaching and the Ministry," RT, February 4, 1922, pp. 14-15.

[5] J. M. Phillippi, "Social Service Danger," RT, April 8, 1922, pp. 3-4.

This ambivalence of Phillippi is illustrative of the attitude of United Brethren during the twenties. Although many of them gave their support to the fundamentalist crusade, they were unable to forget the influence of such men as Bishop Mills and found themselves responding to the call to greater social concern.

Postmillennialism

The way in which their ethical orientation nourished a sympathy for the social gospel appears in the attitude of these denominations toward the premillennialism-postmillennialism issue. Postmillennialism, which held that we are now living in the millennial age at the end of which Christ will come again, had almost no supporters in the United Evangelical Church.[1] Indeed, Homer Dubs, Yale and Union-trained grandson of Bishop Rudolph Dubs and a missionary partner with his father in China (later, a Sinologist at Harvard), thought it necessary to remind his fellow churchmen not to allow "hopes of His speedy coming blind us to our duty to our fellow men."[2]

Far different was the Evangelical Association. Although S. P. Spreng and his editorial successor, William H. Bucks, were conservative on many issues, they could not swallow premillennialism. In 1897 when a "Bible Student's Conference" convened in Spreng's home city of Cleveland, Ohio, he took the occasion to point out the differences between his own viewpoint and those of the leaders of the conference, among whom was C. I. Scofield, the noted dispensationalist leader. After the usual amenities he came to

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[1]Some postmillennialists held that the millennial age still lay in the future. Premillennialism cultivated the apocalyptic mood, seeing this increasingly evil age as hastening toward a day of Armageddon at which time Christ will return and begin his millennial rule. Supra, pp. 316, 333-39.

[2]Homer H. Dubs, "Peace, the Fruit of Righteousness," TE, November 27, 1918, pp. 4-5.

the point:

> But, of course, some things that these good brethren say are also likely to cause confusion. They are all premillennarians. Therein we do not agree with them. That doctrine is the key to their method of Scripture interpretation. It colors their views upon every point. The chief difficulty we see is that in this view the preaching of the Gospel is really a failure. They distinctly teach that the world will never be saved by the preaching of the Gospel; that this will be accomplished only by the personal appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ, with all His resurrected saints, to establish His kingdom in the Earth. All that is achieved in the Gospel age is the gathering out of the "chosen ones" from among the Gentiles. But what a monstrous assumption! It flies in the face of the Divine commission to the disciples, and contradicts a multitude of texts, which can only be gotten rid of by an unwarranted wresting of them from their obvious meaning.[1]

When the noted evangelist, R. A. Torrey, came to Cleveland to hold a city-wide revival in 1907, Spreng welcomed him because of his preaching ability and his opposition to higher criticism, but he was happy that Torrey "wisely refrained" from proclaiming his premillennial views.[2]

Editor Bucks also opposed the premillennial views prevalent among fundamentalists, linking his argument to the missionary cause. This for Bucks was confirmatory proof of the truth of the postmillennial position: "The wonderful expansion of the area of Christian missions is the most palpable indication in sight that the Master is actually coming in majesty."[3]

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[1]S. P. Spreng, "The Bible Student's Conference," EM, March 24, 1897, p. 184. See S. P. Spreng, "The Second Coming of Christ," EM, July 21, 1897, p. 456; S. P. Spreng, "The Second Coming of Christ," EM, December 13, 1899, p. 792.

[2]S. P. Spreng, "The Torrey Mission," EM, February 20, 1907, p. 4. See his editorial, "What Is Keswickism?" EM, January 17, 1900, p. 40. Torrey was a part of the Keswick Movement.

[3]W. H. Bucks, "Prophecy of the Second Advent of Christ," EM, March 11, 1909, p. 3. See W. H. Bucks, "The Second Coming of Christ," EM, July 26, 1916, pp. 4-5; W. H. Bucks, "Scriptural Evidences of Christ's Second Coming," EM, August 2, 1916, p. 4; W. H. Bucks, "What About Christ Coming Again?" EM, February 5, 1919, p. 3; W. H. Bucks, "What Does Christ Teach About His Coming Again?" EM, February 12, 1919, pp. 3-4; W. H. Bucks, Christ's Universal Reign," EM, February 20, 1918, p. 3, in which he contends that "nations must be brought under the reign of moral law as well as individuals." Also see Jacob Stocker, "Pessimism or Optimism, Which?" EM, February 18, 1920, pp. 5-6.

The man who had as much influence as any other on the theology of the Evangelical Association in this period was S. J. Gamertsfelder. His magnum opus sets forth clearly his preference for the postmillennial position.[1] His successor at Evangelical Theological Seminary, John S. Stamm, agreed with his postmillennialism and thought of man as being in partnership with God in the building of the kingdom of God upon earth.[2]

Strangely enough, postmillennialism had few open proponents among United Brethren. A few, however, saw social progress in the world and spoke out in favor of postmillennialism. One of these was A. W. Drury at Union Biblical Seminary.[3] As long as J. M. Phillippi was editor of the Telescope no article openly avowing postmillennialism appeared in its pages. Less than three months after his death, however, his successor was publishing such words as these: "I believe that the main object Jesus Christ had in view was to set up the kingdom of God upon this earth."[4] Many other United Brethren implicitly expressed their postmillennial views in their dedication to the social gospel movement.

Optimism

United Brethren and the Evangelical Association were predisposed to favor the social gospel because of a strong current of optimism with regard to the earthly success of Christianity. The apocalyptic, premillennial view, which looked upon the world as growing worse and worse and hastening

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[1] Gamertsfelder, Systematic Theology, p. 573.

[2] Stamm, Evangelism and Christian Experience, p. 36.

[3] A. W. Drury, "The Last Days," QR, I (April, 1890), 135-47. See H. F. Colby, "The Millennium and Christ's Coming," QR, VI (January, 1895), 18-23.

[4] "My Creed," RT, December 11, 1926, p. 3.

to its doom, simply did not coincide with the facts as they observed them. Job S. Mills, who was to "succeed" to the bishopric two years later, proclaimed this gospel of success to the graduating class of Union Biblical Seminary in 1891 in glowing terms:

> It is your privilege to make your creed fertilize the world, and your lives furnish meat and drink for mankind. It is your privilege to cause the wilderness and the solitary places to be glad, and the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose. It is your privilege to hasten universal fraternity, charity, and social unity, as the new Jerusalem, descending out of heaven to dwell among men, lighting up the whole earth with its glory, the nations walking in the light of it as they hasten through its open gates, to heal their ills by the leaves of its trees, and quench their immortal thirst by its flowing fountains, as they look up to God the Father, with gratitude, exclaiming, "Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."[1]

The United Brethren General Conference of 1893 also breathed this spirit. In response to a fraternal address from a representative of the General Synod of the Lutheran Church, Bishop Weaver rejoiced in the breaking down of barriers between denominations and suggested that this marked the "dawn of the millennium." This growing unity of the church announced that the time was approaching "when the lion and the lamb shall lie down together, and when we shall all be united in spirit, and move against the powers of darkness."[2] The bishops' quadrennial address to the Conference even more clearly exuded this spirit that the millennium was at hand--if not already begun:

> We greet you upon this auspicious occasion. We are in the morning of a new day. The early dawn of the age of all ages is upon the sky. Already we see the rush of marvelous activities and the results of wonderful developments. Philosophy has risen from the dust of ages to walk in new robes beside our holy Christianity. Science shakes hands with holy men. Natural things put on the garb of spiritual power, and all material things seem animated by new, or heretofore unknown, forces. . . . Living, walking, practical, working Christianity is superseding mere dogma, and the cry of the world is for the universal reign of Jesus, the Christ, the man-God.[3]

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[1]Funk, p. 230. [2]GCJUB, 1893, p. 328. [3]Ibid., p. 14.

Under I. L. Kephart the Telescope spoke this optimistic language for nearly twenty years (1889-1908). When the World's Parliament of Religions was held in connection with the Chicago World's Fair of 1893, Kephart defended it against those critics who thought it might be dangerous to give a chance to other religions to publicize their views. Why should truth be afraid to encounter error, asked Kephart, especially in view of the fact that Christianity was slowly but surely triumphing over all opposition?[1] United Brethren need have no hesitancy to defend their faith, he urged, for "by adhering to this faith our souls have been released from the burden of conscious guilt, our pastors and people have been successful in winning scores, hundreds, and thousands to Christ, and our denomination has so prospered that it is larger and more active, vigorous, and successful today than ever before."[2] Numerically speaking, Kephart had a point. Between 1890 and 1900 United Brethren membership rolls were advancing by twenty-five per cent--from 190,000 to 241,000.[3] Theirs was indeed a success story, and Kephart could not resist announcing himself openly as an optimist who was certain that the world was growing better.[4] Shortly before his death he was still cheerfully declaring that "the drift of current events and the trend of public thought . . . leaves no ground for pessimism."[5]

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[1] I. L. Kephart, "The World's Parliament of Religions," RT, September 27, 1893, p. 609.

[2] I. L. Kephart, "For What Does Our Denomination Stand?" RT, March 14, 1894, pp. 161-62.

[3] Eller, These Evangelical United Brethren, p. 110.

[4] RT, December 27, 1893, p. 801; I. L. Kephart, "Are These Paul's 'Perilous Times?'" RT, April 11, 1894, p. 226; I. L. Kephart, "The Progress of Religion," RT, May 15, 1895, p. 305; I. L. Kephart, "What Of the Future?" RT, January 9, 1907, p. 4; cf. Herbert White, "Progress the One Great Law of the Universe," RT, June 29, 1904, p. 809.

[5] I. L. Kephart, "The Coming of His Kingdom," RT, June 3, 1908, p. 3.

United Brethren seminary professors also were prophets of progress.[1] When the fall term of Union Biblical Seminary opened in 1907, George A. Funkhouser, the senior professor, announced that "never in the history of the kingdom was there so much reason as now for inspiration and hope. The Church never saw a brighter day."[2] When the issue arose of whether the United States should enter the League of Nations or not, the United Brethren bishops sanguinely introduced their recommendation for entrance with these words:

> Believing as we do that the rapid extension of the long-ago-inaugurated reign of Jesus Christ is the greatest immediate and permanent need of the world; and
>
> Believing that it is the duty of the church as the divinely ordained agency of the kingdom of God to seek this great and worthy end, and with the purpose that the will of God shall be done on earth as it is in heaven; and
>
> Believing that the complete abolition of war is one of the great aims of the reign and kingdom of Jesus Christ;
>
> Believing that a league of nations fundamentally in harmony with the principles of this kingdom is essential to the abolition of war and the establishing of peace between the nations, and that, if such a league had been in existence during the past fifty years, the great world war would have been impossible; therefore, . . .[3]

At the 1925 session of General Conference the bishops proudly listed the accomplishments of Christianity, among which was nationwide prohibition.[4] Christianity for them was a success story, and United Brethren were proud

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[1] See A. W. Drury, "The Last Days," QR, I (April, 1890), 135-47.

[2] G. A. Funkhouser, "The Aggressive Minister," RT, September 25, 1907, p. 9. C. E. Ashcraft preached a baccalaureate sermon at York College on "Paths to Progress" ("York College Commencement," RT, June 14, 1924, p. 14). See E. B. Kephart, "Human Progress," QR, VIII (January, 1897), 1-11; G. M. Mathews, "Christ the Friend of the Working Classes," QR, IX (October, 1898), 378-79; H. H. Fout, "Christian Evolution," QR, IX (April, 1898), 184-85; W. M. Bell, "Christianity and Social Progress," RT, December 1, 1909, pp. 7-8; W. H. Washinger, "Progress--Christianity," RT, August 7, 1912, pp. 10-11.

[3] RT, December 27, 1919, p. 12. The bishops at the time were Mathews, Bell, Fout, C. J. Kephart, Howard, and Washinger.

[4] GCJUB, 1925, p. 9.

to be a part of it.

In the Evangelical Association Samuel P. Spreng was the leading herald of the approaching kingdom of God. In 1891 he wrote: "The hand of God in history was never more visible than now."[1] This was an amazingly optimistic statement in view of the fact that his denomination was in the process of being divided. Obviously, Spreng was looking far beyond his own church and basing his optimism on the progress he saw in the Christian church as a whole and in all of Western culture. On the basis of these high hopes Spreng lashed out at the prophets of doom. He violently opposed the premillennialism of the Rev. A. B. Simpson and his group that became the Christian Missionary Alliance because, according to Spreng, they did not expect the Gospel to be accepted. Geared to this belief, their missionaries simply were going from one place to another, preaching the Gospel, then moving on quickly to gather together some hearers elsewhere. Summarizing their convictions, Spreng wrote:

> These people do not believe that the world will be brought to Christ in this dispensation. They proceed upon the repugnant implication that the dispensation of the Holy Spirit is wholly inadequate for this. To this end Christ must come again in person. He will come as soon as the Gospel has been preached among all nations for a witness. Then cometh the end, as they assert. Their program therefore is to force the speedy return of the Lord in person.[2]

Editor William H. Bucks perpetuated the success theme undiminished

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[1]S. P. Spreng, "Is Universal Peace in Sight?" EM, September 15, 1891, p. 584.

[2]S. P. Spreng, "Some Missionary Heresies," EM, November 9, 1898, p. 712. Supra, p. 334. Spreng responded with an air of triumph to the Presbyterians' approval of a "Brief Statement of the Reformed Faith" in 1902, which clearly mitigated the harsh Calvinistic doctrines of election and reprobation. He announced: "The new Presbyterianism is to all intents and purposes in the Arminian fold" ("Presbyterian Creed Revision," EM, June 4, 1902, p.360). Also see S. P. Spreng, "The Church and the Future of the World," EM, February 21, 1906, pp. 4-5; William B. Rilling, "The Dawn of an Age of Righteousness," EM, October 24, 1906, p. 7. See Spreng's

during his term in office (1907-19).[1] When World War I broke out, certain "Christian journalists" declared that this was proof that western civilization was a failure. In words that would have appalled contemporary Christians who criticize the equation of Christianity with the best of culture, Bucks rejected a pessimistic interpretation. "That is equivalent to saying that Christianity, to date, is a failure. Nothing could be farther from the truth."[2]

As the entered the twenties, Evangelicals found additional cause for optimism. G. B. Kimmel, president of Evangelical Theological Seminary, called his time "the day of the church's greatest opportunity."[3] And so it must have seemed, for in 1922 came the reunion of United Evangelicals with the Evangelical Association to form the Evangelical Church. In their episcopal address the bishops of the Association predicted that the application of the Golden Rule would solve the world's problems.[4] When the delegates of the two groups met in their uniting conference in the Mack Avenue Church in Detroit that October, it was a festive occasion. Ex-Bishop Fouke of the United Evangelicals felt moved to suggest that this might "be the dawn of

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introduction to the Rev. G. C. Knobel's collection of the papers presented at the Evangelicals' session at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893; also see Spreng's address (The Congress of the Evangelical Association, pp. 13ff., 78-87).

[1] W. H. Bucks, "Is the World Getting Worse?" EM, June 27, 1906, pp.6-7; W. H. Bucks, "Is the World Growing Better?" EM, February 3, 1909, p. 3; W. H. Bucks, "Is the World Growing Better?" EM, October 16, 1912, p. 4.

[2] W. H. Bucks, "Nothing Farther from the Truth," EM, June 2, 1915, p. 5.

[3] G. B. Kimmel, "The Day of the Church's Greatest Opportunity," EM, February 18, 1920, p. 8. A front-page excerpt from James H. Snowden's Is the World Growing Better? appeared in EM, February 28, 1921, p. 1.

[4] Episcopal Message, EM, October 9, 1922, p. 2.

the Millennial Day so long looked for."[1] Evangelicals in 1922 perceived that as children of destiny they were indeed building the Kingdom of God. In this mood they could hardly resist the appeal of the social gospel movement to join with other Christians in hastening the arrival of the Kingdom. Supported by this incurable optimism, the ethical concern of Evangelicals and United Brethren prepared them for a positive response to the social gospel and through it to the ecumenical movement.

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[1]"The Evangelical Church," TE, October 31, 1922, pp. 4-6.

XVI. THE COMMITMENT TO REVIVALISM

In its own backhanded way the persisting commitment to revivalism contributed to the development of ecumenism. Revivalism was by no means the monopoly of militant fundamentalists who opposed the ecumenical movement. On the contrary, the emphasis on the individual's conversion and his personal experience of God was congenial to the liberal's shift of authority from creeds and a literally-interpreted Bible to that of the religious experience of the individual.[1] Revivalistic activities seldom had as their chief goal the securing of commitments to a particular creed. What they sought was an emotionally-charged commitment of the whole person to a new way of life marked by warm religious feelings and an attention to moral duties. If people cared mainly about a warm heart and a clean life, they could easily extend their hands to one another across denominational lines. Therefore, although revivalism in this period (1890-1930) stood over against the social gospel movement as a rival pattern of church life with a different understanding of salvation, it nevertheless made its own contribution to ecumenism.

The commitment of both denominations to revivalism was deep, nourished by their pietistic heritage and strengthened by a century of experience. It was hardly sentimental, for revivalism had written a success story for both churches. The enthusiasm with which they embraced revivalism is not difficult to understand. The records testify that as a result

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[1]Cauthen, pp. 18-19.

of the Billy Sunday campaign in Canton, Ohio, in 1912, First United Brethren Church received a thousand new members and acquired the honor of having the largest Sunday School in the denomination.[1] To argue against success like that would have been difficult.

Revival news filled the pages of the church press. Reporters described the activities of Dwight L. Moody, and the Telescope carried a front-page picture of him when he died.[2] All three major denominational journals narrated the exploits of such well-known evangelists as J. Wilbur Chapman, George Needham, Sam Jones, L. W. Munhall, B. Fay Mills, R. A. Torrey, French Oliver, the incomparable Billy Sunday, and the United Brethren's E. Howard Cadle, who operated a tabernacle in Indianapolis.[3] When Princeton University refused to let Billy Sunday address the students (allegedly because of his lack of culture), H. B. Hartzler poured his scorn

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[1] R. Rock, "It Works and Wins," RT, September 18, 1912, pp. 11-12.

[2] RT, January 3, 1900, p. 1. See the long memorial editorial on Moody's mother (TE, February 5, 1896, p. 44); a report of Moody in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania (TE, May 10, 1898, p. 148); and a letter from Moody at Northfield (TE, July 11, 1899, p. 220).

[3] TE, January 19, 1898, p. 20; TE, January 29, 1903, p. 65; TE, October 31, 1906, p. 696; TE, April 29, 1908, pp. 273, 278-79; TE, February 15, 1911, pp. 101, 104; TE, March 6, 1912, p. 149; H. B. Hartzler, "Billy Sunday As He Is," TE, July 31, 1912, p. 488; J. H. Shirey, "Billy Sunday, as I Saw Him in Action in Scranton," TE, June 24, 1914, pp. 10-11; a long memorial biography of Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman (TE, February 5, 1919, pp. 8-9); "B. Fay Mills in Cleveland," EM, April 28, 1891, p. 264; "The Torrey-Alexander Meetings in Toronto," EM, February 7, 1906, pp. 4-5; EM, December 21, 1910, pp. 10-11; a report on the French Oliver revival in East Cleveland (EM, March 29, 1911, p. 9); "Cleveland's Tribute to 'Billy' Sunday," EM, March 13, 1926, pp. 2-3; RT, May 8, 1895, p. 291; "The Dr. Chapman Meetings," RT, May 10, 1899, p. 580; RT, February 13, 1907, p. 2; F. M. Davis, "The Famous Baseball Evangelist," RT, April 10, 1907, p. 9; RT, January 1, 1908, p. 4; J. M. Phillippi, "Reasons Why," RT, March 16, 1910, p. 4; a picture of E. Howard Cadle and his mother (RT, June 19, 1920, p. 15); "Billy Sunday in Dayton," RT, November 4, 1922, p. 4.

upon the institution for its failure to appreciate the evangelist.[1] When a great revival broke out at the United Evangelicals' own Albright College in 1915, Hartzler reported the glorious event to the denomination.[2]

G. M. Mathews, United Brethren bishop from 1902 to 1921, is a good example of his denomination's commitment to revivalism combined with its interest in social issues. At his death he received a tribute from Charles S. Macfarland of the Federal Council of Churches; yet his eulogist at the memorial service, J. P. Landis of the seminary, remembered him for his evangelistic success as a pastor at the church Landis attended in Dayton:

> Brother Mathews had a glorious ministry of five years with us! Those years were noteworthy for annual, powerful revivals, during one of which 336 members were added to the church roll. On these occasions, he was in his element, and I never shall forget one evening when souls were upon their knees all over that large auditorium calling for mercy, and Pastor Mathews' heart was ravished with joy as he paced up and down the aisles praising God, while his face appeared to be literally transfigured.[3]

To the extent that United Brethren had a theology, A. W. Drury was correct in calling it a "revival theology."[4] They enunciated it far less clearly in the Confession of Faith, however, than in the life and work of the church.

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[1] TE, March 17, 1915, p. 3. In the same issue of his paper Hartzler carried the report of a great revival at Yale under Sherwood Eddy (ibid.). The Messenger's editor, William H. Bucks, who was a strong promoter of revivalism (Buechler, Work of Bucks, chap. ii, p. 4), contrasted the praise of William Jennings Bryan for Billy Sunday with "the very uncharitable onslaught" of Washington Gladden ("Secretary W. J. Bryan and Billy Sunday," EM, February 4, 1914, pp. 4-5).

[2] TE, March 31, 1915, p. 3.

[3] J. P. Landis, "Bishop G. M. Mathews," RT, April 16, 1921, pp. 4-5.

[4] A. W. Drury, "United Brethren Theology," RT, March 16, 1929, p. 6. Cf. S. P. Spreng's summary of essential aspects of the Evangelical Association: thorough conversions, revivalism, witnessing, holiness, a missionary church ("Five Evangelical Essentials," EM, May 4, 1904, p. 280).

Centrality of Christian Experience

This "revival theology" had always placed Christian experience in the central place.[1] With Christian experience in the foreground and creedal and theological differences fading into the background, they could more easily consider church union with other denominations. During this period United Brethren carried on negotiations with Cumberland Presbyterians, Christians, Methodist Protestants, Congregationalists, the Reformed Church, and the Evangelical Synod of North America.[2] When United Brethren were contemplating the plan for union with the Reformed Church and the Evangelical Synod in 1929, Dr. L. F. John, writing in favor of the projected union, rejoiced that "theological differences have faded out, lost their separative significance during the last fifty years."[3] Instead, Christians have come to accept love as the supreme law of Christ's kingdom. "If your theology comes into conflict with love, you had better change your theology."[4] C. A. Mock summarized the attitude of both denominations when he said: "In religion the heart is supreme."[5] By "the heart" Evangelicals and United Brethren meant to give a legitimate place to emotion--to religious feelings,

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[1] Apparently some thought that the Evangelicals' Articles of Faith should say more about Christian experience. Reuben Yeakel seems to be defending against this criticism in The Church Discipline, Doctrine and Confession of Faith, p. 11.

[2] Eller, These Evangelical United Brethren, p. 118.

[3] L. F. John, "Church Union," RT, May 4, 1929, p. 8.

[4] Ibid., p. 9.

[5] C. A. Mock, "'Speak to the Heart,'" EM, January 8, 1927, pp. 6-8. At the time of church union between the Evangelical Association and United Evangelicals, Ammon Hangen wrote: "Our evangelicalness needs to be that of the intellect, surely, for with it also the spirits are tried; but let it be that of the heart primarily" ("A Name and a Life," TE, December 12, 1922, pp. 4-5).

and to their outward, public expression.[1] Liberals and conservatives agreed that the essence of Christianity was "the spirit of God in man's soul."[2]

This experience of God available to every man had a semi-mystical cast, according to Spreng and Gamertsfelder: "The very essence and heart of the Christian religion is communion with God. It is fellowship, association, reciprocity of life with Him in whom we live and have our being."[3] Spreng defined "life in Christ" as "personal union with Him." This union with God in Christ "is the ladder on which prayer climbs up to God, the connecting line through which the soul's messages flash to the throne of the Eternal" and is the way in which "God communicates His life and love, His Spirit and grace."[4] In a memorial tribute to ex-Bishop Yeakel, Spreng noted that "Bro. Yeakel's temperament was tinged with the mysticism of the Pietist, and his method of turning inward upon himself, and, in utter abstraction, burying himself in the depths of spiritual truth, made him peculiarly susceptible to the influence of the Holy Spirit."[5]

Bishop Mills discerned a mystical tendency among United Brethren. Tracing this back to Philip William Otterbein, Mills realized the

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[1]See William M. Bell's The Social Message of Our Lord, p. 5. The Rev. Charles G. Unangst was a conservative, unlike Bell, but he, too, wanted to retain a place for the expression of religious emotions ("Religion Without Emotion," TE, December 1, 1915, p. 10).

[2]J. S. Mills, "The Essence of Christianity," QR, VI (January, 1895), 33-47; Charles Wesley Naumann, "The Higher Criticism of the Bible," EM, September 8, 1897, p. 562; John S. Stamm, "The Doctrinal Teaching of the Evangelical Church," p. 2; S. P. Spreng, "Christian Experience," EM, October 10, 1900, p. 648.

[3]S. J. Gamertsfelder, "Reciprocity in Religion," EM, March 11, 1903, p. 145.

[4]S. P. Spreng, "Union With Christ," EM, December 2, 1903, p. 760.

[5]S. P. Spreng, "Career and Character of Ex-Bishop Yeakel," EM, March 16, 1904, p. 168.

significance of the fact that such mystical books as Upham's had been on the Course of Study. In fact, wrote Mills,

> for myself, I should like to see in our Church this spirit embodied in a school like Halle in its best days of the Pietists, gathering about it and sending forth such a literature as there originated, and such men as Francke, Spener, Bengel, Tholuck, Neander, and others. Such a warm-hearted piety and clearness of spiritual vision added to the practical American life of good works would be an ideal type of Christianity.[1]

When Bishop Breyfogel addressed the General Conference of the Evangelical Association in 1911, he struck a responsive chord when he identified the need of the times as "a more real sense of God." Breyfogel went on to explain what he meant by this:

> The consciousness of God is intuitive and primary. It underlies all rational argument. Without it no argument for the existence of God would be effective. . . . The real sense of God is not a species of mysticism which has thrown off rational inhibition or lies hidden in liturgical forms, but a deep heart experience of God controlled and sustained by a knowledge obtained from His self-revelation. It is God revealed in human experience.[2]

What continued to make this approach so attractive and satisfying was the fact that it was an answer to the question of where the seat of authority lay for the Christian. In a time when men were honestly questioning the authority of the Bible and churchly creeds, the man of faith could find stability in his inner experience of God. Furthermore, this made "the humblest believer . . . a credible witness to the truth of religion."[3]

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[1] J. S. Mills, "Mysticism in the United Brethren Church," QR, IX (April, 1898), 137.

[2] S. C. Breyfogel, "The Call of the Hour--A More Real Sense of God," EM, October 11, 1911, pp. 10-13. The United Brethren bishop, Ezekiel B. Kephart, agreed with Breyfogel that the most impressive argument for the existence of God was not a rational proof drawn from the arsenal of Christian evidences, but a "vital experience of saving faith" (Apologetics, p. 167).

[3] Augustus Krecker, "The Certainties of Religion," EM, January 23, 1901, p. 49. In their Episcopal Message to the General Conference of the Evangelical Association in 1922, the bishops saw the implications of their commitment to religious experience for their attitude toward religious

Revivalism's emphasis on Christian experience made it easy to slip from Moody to Schleiermacher. One man who did so was S. J. Gamertsfelder. The fundamental principle of his Systematic Theology was that Christian experience provides the basis for doctrine. He set this forth in language that men could not misunderstand:

> The doctrinal teachings of Schleiermacher, Ritschl, Kaftan, Schlatter, Clarke and Brown are not to be ignored. Nevertheless, the convictions we set forth as doctrines must ever be those which spring out of our own religious experience as we appropriate by faith the revelation God has given us in Christ. Realizing that all things are ours, the Church and the world, the apostles and the philosophers, the exegetes and the theologians, we nevertheless seek the rationale of our faith in our own religious consciousness.[1]

Gamertsfelder even extended this principle to the believer's approach to the Bible: "The final test of the truthfulness of that which is revealed is found in man's own consciousness."[2]

One asset of making Christian experience central was the aid it provided with the difficult matter of higher criticism. Joseph Cook had called "experimental criticism" the highest criticism of all. If Scripture met the needs of a man, he need not worry about what higher critics were saying, for he himself already had applied the highest criticism.[3] Generally, Evangelicals and United Brethren found a "perfect correspondence between

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education. They said: "Religious education must be regarded, however, as only a part (a vital part) of the sublime mission of the Church in winning men to Jesus Christ. . . . Education dare never be regarded as a substitute for religious experience, the rebirth of the penitent believer and the full surrender of the life to God" (EM, October 16, 1922, p. 3).

[1] Gamertsfelder, Systematic Theology, p. 40.

[2] Ibid., p. 95. Gamertsfelder says this eloquently in "The Ultimate Ground of Christian Faith" (EM, February 28, 1906, p. 7). Cf. the statement of one United Brethren pastor that he believed in the deity of Christ on the basis of his own religious experience (J. F. Strayer, "Why I Believe in the Deity of Christ," RT, November 10, 1928, pp. 6-7). Also see L. F. John, "The Basis of a True Theology," QR, VI (October, 1895), 346-48.

[3] Joseph Cook, "The Highest Criticism," EM, August 9, 1892, p. 499.

experience and doctrines of the Bible."[1] Relying upon Cook's principle, the simple believer had a basis for judging those Biblical critics who seemed hypercritical and even skeptical; perhaps they were not fully competent to do their work because they lacked this experience.[2] The Christian hardly needed the higher critic to tell him whether the Bible is inspired when he already possessed the inward capacity to judge this:

> It is interesting to know the order in which Bach, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Mozart, and the rest lived and wrought, and the debt one owed to another. But "The Messiah" would be as glorious an oratorio if we knew not who wrote it, just as the second Isaiah, whether anonymous or not, sings the everlasting raptures of love and revelation. In the last analysis, we only know that religious truth which we have tested in our souls. That is the revelation by which we find God, and that is life by which we are born again. The proof of inspiration is not an external evidence or physical wonder, but in the appealing power of vital truth that makes doubt dumb, and by the waysides of the world we learn, as did the woman of Samaria, that neither the sacred mountain nor the holy city, but the spirit of man and the spirit of God, are the final sanctities.[3]

Dr. Charles Mock of Western Union College confessed that this in part was what bolstered him when he confronted the New Theology and was "momentarily in danger of being carried completely off my feet."[4] Although their idea of orthodoxy would have differed from Mock's, the United Evangelical bishops had the same thing in mind in their addresses to the General Conferences of 1902 and 1906 when they asserted that "religious experience," "a healthy spiritual life" and "the indwelling and fulness of the Holy Spirit" were the best protections of the orthodoxy of a church.[5]

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[1] E. M. Spreng, "Permanent Elements of Christianity," EM, September 19, 1893, p. 593.

[2] Franklin Delong Geary, "Qualities of an Experimental Knowledge of Religion," EM, December 7, 1898, pp. 769-70.

[3] Hervin U. Roop, "Bible and Modern Man," RT, May 3, 1919, pp. 6-7. Roop was the president of Eastern College, Manassas, Virginia.

[4] C. A. Mock, "The Credentials of a True Orthodoxy--Third, Evangelism and Orthodoxy," EM, April 16, 1927, pp. 9-10.

[5] GCJUE, 1902, p. 44; GCJUE, 1906, pp. 44-45.

Christian experience proved valuable at another point. Evangelicals and United Brethren had never been very patient with doubt. The conviction that a man could have certainty in religious matters had become a traditional part of their message. In fact, in his paper presented at the World's Congress of Religions at Chicago in 1893 J. W. Etter called "assurance" the "first doctrine of our denomination."[1] Religious experience--"the inward impression on the soul," the "indwelling of the Holy Spirit"--this was the satisfying answer to the quest for certainty in matters of faith.[2] S. J. Gamertsfelder spoke representatively for both denominations when he wrote:

> An inner practical experience of our religious nature is in reality the ultimate evidence of our faith and knowledge.
>
> Certitude of knowledge, in its final analysis, is nothing more than such a well-grounded conviction of an alleged truth that satisfies man's whole nature. In the doctrine of Christian Assurance we find a precious truth immediately given in experience that fully satisfies every demand of the human soul. Man's whole religious nature is perfectly satisfied with the evidence that supports the truth underlying his Christian consciousness. We can never be more certain of any external thing than of that which is found within, and manifests itself to our consciousness.[3]

In general, this emphasis on Christian experience led both churches towards ecumenism. In his analysis of the place of experience in the method and content of Christian theology as developed by American theologians, Daniel Day Williams lists the ecumenical urge as one of its consequences. Christian experience provided a basis for cooperation among

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[1] J. W. Etter, "Doctrines of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ," RT, October 25, 1893, p. 679.

[2] Ibid.; J. W. Hoover, "The Infallible Test," TE, October 10, 1894, p. 321.

[3] S. J. Gamertsfelder, "Christian Certitude by Experience," EM, October 29, 1913, p. 6. Cf. Thomas Bowman, The Great Salvation, p. 67; William M. Bell, The Social Message of Our Lord, p. 20; A. W. Drury, Faith and Knowledge, p. 23; S. P. Spreng, "Christian Assurance--Intuitive and Demonstrative," EM, July 18, 1893, p. 456; H. L. Zachman, "The Doctrine of Assurance," EM, November 15, 1916, pp. 6-7; B. F. Fritz, "Religious Certainty," RT, June 13, 1900, pp. 744-45.

people of differing doctrinal persuasions.[1]

But Christian experience could be divisive. When United Evangelicals were contemplating and planning church union with the Evangelical Association, one prominent Illinois minister rated the "spiritual power" and "fervor" of the United Evangelicals as superior to that of the Association and doubted whether the latter would be an asset to them.[2] Usually, however, Christian experience was the common ground on which differing groups found they could unite.

Persistence of Anti-Intellectualism

The emphasis on Christian experience resulted in an anti-intellectualism and an antipathy to theology which had characterized the early days of both denominations. Perhaps this did make religion almost impervious to the "acids of modernity," but not if ecumenism is an aspect of modernity, for this playing down of creeds and theological differences was undoubtedly a preparatio for at least one aspect of the ecumenical movement. This shows up clearly in H. Paul Douglass' study of church unity movements done at the close of this period. A large percentage of Evangelicals and even more of United Brethren responded favorably to this item on Douglass' questionnaire:

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[1]Daniel Day Williams, "Tradition and Experience in American Theology," The Shaping of American Religion, eds. James Ward Smith and A. Leland Jamison (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 448. Three of the other four uses which Williams lists also apply to Evangelical and United Brethren "theologians:" the treatment of religious experience as a source of knowledge of God, the use of religious experience as the sign of vitality in religious faith, the emphasis on experience as the testing ground for moral character and for achievement of moral goals. Omitted, of course, was "the modernist use of present experience for criticism and interpretation of traditional doctrines and practices."

[2]B. R. Schultze, "Would the United Church Be More Spiritual Than Either Now Is?" TE, January 17, 1922, pp. 13-14.

> The spiritual unity felt by Christians belongs to and exists on a deeper level than that of the intellect. Exact agreement in thinking about Christian truth and on forms of language expressing that truth is accordingly not essential for a union of churches.[1]

The only groups which exceeded the percentage of the United Brethren's favorable response to this item were Congregational-Christians, the Federated Churches, the Society of Friends, the Reformed Church in the United States, and Universalists.

Anti-intellectualism appears in the feeble response given to the Quarterly Review, the United Brethren theological journal begun in 1890. In the first four years the subscription list had never exceeded 625, and this peak came in the first year of its publication. Indeed, the number of subscribers had dropped to 152 in 1893,[2] and only by the feverish efforts of a few men did the journal maintain its existence until 1908.

Although revivalism often furnished the occasion for theological discussion, there were times when it could not afford the "luxury" of theology.[3] When it threatened to interfere with efforts to win souls, theology had to be relegated to a subordinate place. Editor Kephart argued that Jesus Christ had not been interested in systematic theology during his earthly life; therefore, why should we?[4] Bishop Bell rejoiced that "the period of useless theological discussion and man-imposed dogma is forever past" and that "henceforth Christianity is to devote itself with genuine consecration to building up the race through what is essential in its message and mission."[5] Liberals and conservatives both were happy that the dogmatic theologian had lost his place of importance in the church.

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[1] H. Paul Douglass, p. 306. [2] GCJUB, 1893, p. 86.

[3] "Hiram Golf on Theology and Foreknowledge," RT, March 14, 1894, p. 168.

[4] RT, March 4, 1896, p. 145. [5] Bell, Torches Aloft, p. 144.

Revivalists of various stripes agreed that in their approach to Christ they must be "less concerned about correct definitions of his person and more that we be mastered by him and live his life."[1]

Creeds, the product of the dogmatic theologian, fell under the suspicion (if not denunciation) of revivalists as they attempted to understand the evangelistic mission of the church. Early in the period the United Brethren editor, I. L. Kephart, had carried on his own private crusade against creeds. He was convinced that "the progress of Christianity has been greatly retarded by the misdeeds and erroneous creeds of many who professed to be its admirers and advocates."[2] Kephart illustrated his point by comparing the Westminster Confession, which he called "a scab on orthodoxy,"[3] with the Declaration of Independence. He concluded that "few words should be wasted on mere human creeds."[4] Kephart's younger contemporary, Bishop Bell, called creeds "denominational jackets" and rejoiced that they

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[1]Edwin G. Frye, "The Fundamental Message Changes Not," EM, November 1, 1924, p. 3. Also see Bishop Dubs, "Biography of Rev. John Schneider," TE, January 28, 1901, pp. 28-29; A. E. Hangen, "Three Christian, Unifying Challenges," TE, December 19, 1922, pp. 4-6. A member of the United Brethren Church in Indiana, E. Howard Cadle, became well-known throughout his home state and beyond as a result of his founding and operation of a non-denominational tabernacle in Indianapolis which was revivalistic in purpose. He was given a chance to present his testimony to the United Brethren General Conference in 1921. His remarks illustrate revivalism's determination to simplify Christian doctrine in order to appeal to the common man. "I like to be old-fashioned in my religion," he said. "I don't like the new-fangled style. Not philosophy or theology, but Christ is what we want" (GCJUB, 1921, p. 439).

[2]I. L. Kephart, "Practical Skepticism vs. Practical Christianity," RT, March 9, 1898, pp. 290-91.

[3]I. L. Kephart, "Fundamental Principles Versus Creeds," RT, June 12, 1901, p. 741.

[4]I. L. Kephart, "Practical Skepticism vs. Practical Christianity," RT, March 9, 1898, pp. 290-91.

were "not as snug and stiff as they were some years ago."[1] A. W. Drury pointed out with some satisfaction that United Brethren had never required formal assent to the Confession of Faith of those who wished to become members.[2] In 1929 when the United Brethren were contemplating union with the Reformed Church in the United States and with the Evangelical Synod of North America, someone criticized the proposed Tri-Church creed for being a little thin. Editor Thompson of the United Brethren Review replied reassuringly that "it is well to give due care to a system of correct doctrine, but there are other things as vital. . . . The thing to be sought is a devoted religious life.[3]

Among Evangelicals the same disenchantment with creeds prevailed. S. J. Gamertsfelder was not unhappy in noting the tendency of contemporary theology to turn from dogmatic theology, creeds, and confessions to "the ultimate sources of theological thought."[4] For him Christian experience was a more "ultimate source." Evangelicals were not unconcerned about doctrine, but believed that deeds upheld important doctrines better than creeds.[5] Bishop John S. Stamm interpreted the life and purpose of his denomination as a matter of calling "men from the worship of creeds and

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[1] Bell, Torches Aloft, p. 24.

[2] A. W. Drury, "Our Confession--Our History," QR, III (January, 1892), 42.

[3] H. A. Thompson, "A Creed Sufficiently Full," QR, XVII (July-August, 1906), 248. Also see Edwin Thomas Aldrich, "What is Genuine Christianity?" RT, October 30, 1926, pp. 6-7; J. W. Hott, "Basis of Denominationalism," QR, X (July, 1899), 193-202.

[4] S. J. Gamertsfelder, "Tendencies of Modern Theological Scholarship," EM, September 7, 1904, p. 561.

[5] See "On the State of the Church," a report presented to the 1911 General Conference of the Evangelical Association (EM, October 25, 1911, pp. 4-5).

doctrinal standards to the worship of the living God."[1] Stamm likened the experience of his denomination to that of prophetic figures of the Bible and Christian tradition:

> The prophets of Israel had to fight stereotyped and formal religion; Jesus had to break through a formal legalism and ritualism of his day; the Reformers had to break through a rigid ecclesiasticism to find essential religion, and the founders of the Evangelical Church had to break through a rigid and lifeless orthodoxy to release the spirit of true religion. . . . They restated the great doctrines of Christianity in terms of experience and once more made them live.[2]

Hence, when Evangelicals became involved in the ecumenical movement, few of them developed any interest in the Faith and Order discussions. In keeping with their traditional concerns, they much preferred the practical aims and activities of the Life and Work movement.

Defenders of creeds were scarce indeed. In an attempt to guard against a complete eclipse and neglect of all historic creedal statements, Bishop G. M. Mathews (1902-1921) reminded his fellow United Brethren that creeds might serve as reminders of the great truths for which the church has stood. Even Mathews pointed out, however, that creeds were clearly subordinate to the Bible and that "simplicity and candor" were demanded in any formal statement of Biblical truth.[3] Creeds and revivalism were not compatible, and both United Brethren and Evangelicals were to remain revivalistic churches for many years.

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[1] Stamm, "The Doctrinal Teaching of the Evangelical Church," p. 26.

[2] Ibid., p. 42. The influence of Bishop Stamm is evident in the Episcopal Message to the Evangelicals' General Conference in 1930. "Our people," declared the bishops, "cannot tolerate a lifeless creed, however orthodox it may be" (Episcopal Message, EM, October 11, 1930, p. 7).

[3] G. M. Mathews, "The Church and the Times," QR, III (July, 1892), 194-95.

Conclusion

Ecumenism began to flourish among Evangelicals and United Brethren during this period, but interest in it was not the product of serious theological study and discussion. It thrived particularly during the late twenties, when it offered a way of escape to denominational leaders harassed by fears that the fundamentalist movement would lead to denominational schisms. Nourishment for it came from the ethical orientation (and the resulting interest in the social gospel) and the revivalism of both denominations. In some ways the social gospel movement and revivalism stood opposed as rivals, but they agreed at one point: they could conduct their respective ministries successfully whether or not they were undergirded by sophisticated theologies. Therefore, involvement with the ecumenical movement, at least in the twenties, did not lead to any quickening of theological interest and activity. It curtailed the genuine interest in theological matters which had developed shortly before the turn of the century and had led to sympathy for the fundamentalist crusade. The theological "coming of age" of both denominations was indefinitely postponed.

CONCLUSION

In the summer of 1903 the United Evangelical bishop, Rudolph Dubs, delivered a lecture on "The Consciousness of God as Conditioned by Christianity" at a denominational Bible conference. The response of the reporter dramatizes the perennial ambivalence of Evangelicals and United Brethren toward theology:

> This was a gigantic production from the giant mind of this masterful servant of God. The reporter in following this lecture was soon beyond his depths; and as he was not able to swim well in these waters, he was compelled to remain nearer shore. Hence, no report of this lecture.
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> The committee is requested to either secure a more competent reporter, or have less profound themes discussed at the next conference.[1]

Throughout their history Evangelicals and United Brethren have held two concerns in uneasy alliance--the cultivation of simple piety and serious attention to Christian doctrine. The preoccupation with simple and vital Christian experience developed as a response to what they regarded as a grave deficiency in other American Protestant churches around them at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Both came to birth in the Second Awakening, deriving their theological orientation and self-understanding from Wesleyanism and Pietism. The solicitude for pure doctrine never became as intense as it did at Princeton, where the Hodges and Archibald Alexander developed their brand of Presbyterian orthodoxy. The desire to maintain correct doctrine had deep roots, of course, for during much of its history the Christian church has given attention to correct and appropriate

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[1]"Perkasie Park Bible Conference," TE, July 30, 1903, p. 484.

statements of its faith. The minority status of Evangelicals and United Brethren in American church life nourished this concern; they needed to explain and justify their reasons for being. Also, the presence of what they regarded as aberrations from Christian truth--deism and infidelity, rationalism, Unitarianism and Universalism, the New Theology, and higher criticism--called for careful attention to pure doctrine.

Devotion to disciplined theological study did not always accompany the concern for pure doctrine, however. Very early in the history of both denominations they did become interested in theological study, though not in theological schools. This interest gradually accelerated, stimulated among Evangelicals by the threat of atheistically educated German immigrants, until by the turn of the century most men admitted that ministers needed good theological training. The purpose of such training, however, was to prepare for defense of the faith. The division among Evangelicals in the nineties strengthened this defensiveness, for neither group could risk being accused of being the less spiritual group--less true to the faith of the fathers.

This conception of the aim of theological training was undergirded by a static concept of language, which regarded theology as a matter of stating eternal principles in timeless language and then defending them. The dedication to Scottish Common-Sense Realism helped to intensify this pattern by the assurance it provided with its epistemological, ontological, and cosmological dualisms. Unable to appreciate Schleiermacher or his successors because of their failure to be biblicists, both churches followed Joseph Cook and company along a path that led from Biblical rationalism to theological rationalism--a position which was hardly in keeping with the traditional emphasis on Christian experience. Whether or not any leader

realized this dilemma, it is clear that no theologian in either church stepped forward with a constructive, creative resolution to this impasse.

Theological rationalism led to affinity with the rising fundamentalist movement. However, the threat to denominational unity which it presented led to a reaction, both against this form of conservatism and also against the developing interest in theology. This reaction was fed by a continuing undercurrent of anti-intellectualism which the emphasis on Christian experience and the dedication to Scottish Common-Sense Philosophy had fortified. The resulting posture of both churches blurred their historical perspective and also their capacity to deal effectively with contemporary patterns of thought. The recurrence of anti-intellectualism in the twenties is partly explainable by a look at the theologies which Evangelicals and United Brethren were confronting as they were beginning to come out into the larger theological world. The alternatives were the New Theology on the one hand and militant fundamentalism (or Princeton scholasticism) on the other, each repellent in its own way. How different the story might read if Karl Barth had been born twenty years earlier.

Evangelicals and United Brethren very early assumed a posture of defensiveness in theology, supported by the confidence that the theological task involved little more than the simple explanation of Biblical truth or the repeating of eternal principles in timeless language. As a result, they had little incentive to spend much time and effort on theology. Therefore, the writing of the Articles of Faith was not a particularly creative endeavor, and it required little revision through the years. Far more creative efforts were made in the innumerable informal opportunities to engage in theological discussion--for example, in the examination of books to be published or in the selection of hymns for the denominational

hymnals. If doctrine cannot be developed, theology has, of course, to be a conservative enterprise--and theological study or inquiry inevitably becomes the refutation of omnipresent enemies of the faith.

This pattern of defensiveness in itself tended to reduce theological discussion. Since Evangelicals and United Brethren probably possessed as much desire to exhibit Christian love as other Christians, they naturally avoided theological discussion whenever possible, for it presupposed some error to be refuted. This avoidance was compatible with the revivalistic pattern of church life, with its lack of strong emphasis upon education and catechetical instruction. Such non-theological factors as their rural setting and their lower social class status also contributed to this style of life.

Two (and sometimes three) churches have been under scrutiny here. Telling (and reading) three stories in one has its own unique problems. However, at very few points did the experience of these churches differ significantly. As the more German group, Evangelicals felt the threat of German rationalism in mid-nineteenth century in a way which the United Brethren did not. In the first three decades of the present century fundamentalist theologies, dispensationalism, and premillennialism attracted the United Evangelicals far more than the other two groups. Apart from these variations, the experience of Evangelicals, United Evangelicals, and United Brethren was remarkably similar. And the union in 1946 made their story one.

A comparison with American Methodism.--Throughout their history Evangelicals and United Brethren generally have felt a closer kinship with Methodists than with any other group. In the early years the patterns of church life and the approach to theology of all three groups were quite

similar. For instance, all three embraced Scottish Common-Sense Realism. Some variations developed, however, as the years passed. The minority status of Evangelicals and United Brethren tended to make them far more defensive in theological matters than Methodists. Also, they were slower than Methodism in developing institutions for the theological training of their ministers. Because Methodists had become acquainted with the larger theological world earlier, they had begun to come to terms with evangelical liberalism by the end of the century. Consequently, when the fundamentalist movement precipitated a struggle within Northern Methodism in the twenties, liberalism emerged the winner, at least among the leaders of the church. Evangelicals and United Brethren did not have the same battle, for theological learning had proceeded at a much slower pace, thus reducing the potency of the temptation offered by evangelical liberalism. These two churches did not possess a continuity of theological tradition which could provide the framework for continuing conversation on theological issues. Methodists, however, had begun to attack this problem far more aggressively. Furthermore, the two smaller churches lacked an understanding of theology which would have allowed such a tradition to develop. One factor which exerted identical influence for all three groups was their institutional status. When theological differences threatened to divide Methodists in the nineteen twenties, both they and Evangelicals and United Brethren ruled potentially divisive theological discussion out of bounds. Far more important than doctrinal purity was institutional unity and strength. As quiet fell upon the theological battlegrounds about 1930, Methodist leaders through the influence of personalism had become more liberal in orientation than Evangelical and United Brethren leaders. Probably there was little difference, however, between the rank and file in the three churches.

After 1930.--Because of the recurrence of anti-intellectualism in the late twenties and the lack of a theological tradition within which men could work, Evangelicals and United Brethren were not well prepared for the theological changes of the thirties and forties. Since they had not fully come to terms with Schleiermacher, the crisis theology of Barth and Brunner could not mean as much to them. Yet some of its emphases were congenial to them--such as the emphasis on the written Word. Although neither church participated in the ecumenical movement primarily as the result of theological considerations (They were more interested in Life and Work than in Faith and Order.), their association with men of other churches helped to make them aware of the larger theological currents of the time. Indirectly, this affected the theological seminaries. All three institutions became increasingly concerned to acquire faculty members who had the necessary graduate degrees to enable them to maintain accreditation and standing in the larger church and in the academic community. This meant that more teachers were coming from Union, Yale, Chicago, Drew, and Boston. Thus, students in the thirties and forties were exposed to the tradition of Schleiermacher, to higher criticism, and to Barth, Brunner, Bultmann and Tillich. But this exposure occurred within a partial vacuum, for Evangelical and United Brethren students could not approach these new theological positions from within a settled theological tradition. It is not surprisingly, therefore, that Evangelicals and United Brethren should be hospitable to the ecumenical movement during these years. Although much interest in it was due to their Pietistic proclivity to play down theological differences, perhaps a few thoughtful men realized that the ecumenical movement contained the potential for supplying what they lacked--a church-centered tradition. The larger Christian church offered a wealth of theological understanding which a constricted denominationalism could never provide.

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